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THE
GENERAL REGISTER
FOR
1827.





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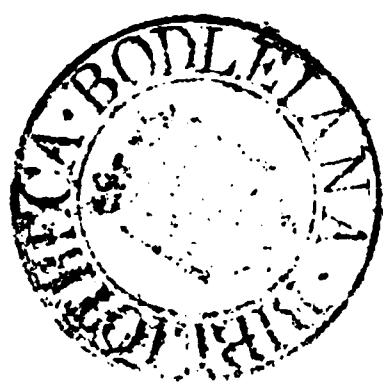
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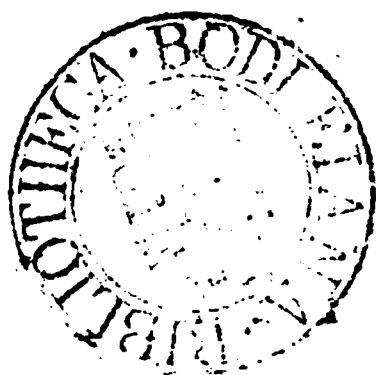


THE
GENERAL REGISTER
OF
POLITICS AND LITERATURE
IN
EUROPE AND AMERICA,
FOR THE YEAR
1827.

PRECEDED BY A MEMOIR
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE CANNING.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE & CO. EDINBURGH ;
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P R E F A C E.

IN presenting the following Volume to the notice of the public, it may perhaps be necessary to state, that the sole intention of the Editor has been, to give a condensed and popular view of the Political and Literary progress of the different countries in Europe and America. The rapid increase and diffusion of knowledge, civilization, and liberal sentiment, call for such a Work; and the Editor only laments, that, in the ensuing pages, the plan on which it shall in future be annually conducted is so feebly and imperfectly developed. From the late period at which it was determined that the present Volume should be prepared, it was impossible to effect the necessary arrangements; but it is hoped, next year, in one, or perhaps two Volumes, to draw up an accurate and satisfactory Register of Politics, Science, and Literature.

ERRATUM.

**P. 60, line 9 from bottom, for Electorate of France, read
Electorate of Hanover.**

MEMOIR

OF THE

RIGHT HON. GEORGE CANNING.

THE subject of this Memoir was descended from an ancient family, which originally resided in Warwickshire, but in consequence of having, in the reign of Elizabeth, received a grant of land in the county of Londonderry, afterwards settled in Ireland. Stratford Canning, Esq. the father of the late lamented Premier, left his native country at an early age, to prosecute the study of the law in London. His genius for political discussion appeared very promising; and there can be little doubt that he would have risen to considerable eminence as a lawyer, had he not been compelled, by youthful imprudence, to quit that profession. Having married a young lady, who, although highly accomplished in other respects, was destitute of the advantages of either fortune or family, he incurred his father's *displeasure*, and his income was *on that account* considerably reduced. In these

bly permanent kind, must have had a considerable influence on the future character and opinions of Mr Canning. But the circumstance which it might have been expected would have materially affected his sentiments at such an early age, was his intimate acquaintance with Mr Sheridan. From his connection with that eminent man, and his frequent opportunities of intercourse with him, Mr Canning early conceived a high respect for Sheridan, which he has been often heard to express. In these circumstances, it was generally supposed, that he would dedicate his talents and exertions to the support of that political party, of which his early patron and friend was at that time a distinguished ornament. At no period indeed, in the history of the British Parliament, has the Opposition been able to boast of men superior in intellectual might to Fox, Burke, and Sheridan. By habitual intercourse with these men, the youthful mind of Canning imbibed those principles which, at a later period in his political career, were fully displayed. The cause of the change which is alleged to have taken place in his political sentiments, has been, with some writers, the subject of considerable speculation ; but it is at best a doubtful question, whether the opinions of Mr Canning ever underwent any material alteration. He was early connected by friendship, it is true, with the leaders of the Opposition ; but even then he appears to have approved, to a certain extent, of the measures of Mr Pitt, to whose acquaintance he had been introduced by Mr Jenkinson. It was under the patronage of Pitt, that he entered *Parliament in 1793* ; and though it was his evident *anxiety to follow in the steps of that great man,*

His opinions were somewhat moderated by the sentiments he had been accustomed to hear at the table of Sheridan. His Toryism was never altogether free from a mixture of liberality; and although circumstances, through the greater part of his life, prevented him from developing his principles in their full extent, yet, with his increasing influence in the cabinet they were gradually unfolded, and at length, on his appointment to the Premiership, brought into free and unfettered operation.

On the introduction of Mr Canning to Parliament, the state of political affairs in Europe was peculiarly favourable for the display of his eminent talents, both as an orator and statesman. The ancient monarchy of France had been overturned, and those deeds of atrecity and violence had begun to be perpetrated, the very recollection of which shocks the feelings of humanity. Elated by the success with which their revolutionary efforts had been crowned, the French Convention issued a proclamation on the 19th. November 1792, encouraging "All who wished to procure liberty; and they charged their generals to give assistance to such people, and to defend such citizens as have suffered, or are suffering in the cause of liberty." It was the obvious wish of the Convention, in publishing this manifesto, to excite throughout Europe the same revolutionary spirit which had already deluged the cities and villages of France with the blood of thousands of peaceful citizens. For some time the British government, though appalled by the horrid deeds of blood of which the French people *had been guilty*, declared its intention of *preserving, in the mean time, a strict neutrality.*

In the end of 1792, the British Parliament met; and in the opening address, his Majesty announced that, from the attempts which the French had of late made to excite rebellion in other countries, and from the unjust measures which they had threatened to adopt towards his allies the States-General, he had judged it necessary to augment both the civil and military force of the country. Scarcely a month had elapsed from the time that the French Convention had avowed their design of attacking Holland, when a French frigate, with several smaller vessels, sailed up the Scheldt, for the purpose of bombarding Antwerp. To appease the British Government, the French Ambassador, who, although his functions had ceased, by the deposition of his sovereign, on the 10th August 1792, was permitted to remain in London, was authorized to declare to the English Minister the earnest desire of the French Government that the friendly connection of the two nations should be preserved. The Ambassador attempted, at the same time, to give a restricted meaning to the decree of the 19th November, and denied all intention, on the part of France, to invade Holland, if that country preserved her neutrality. To this declaration the reply of the British Minister was explicit. He observed, that the conduct of the French Government, in encouraging secret societies in Great Britain, completely belied the explanation which had been attempted to be given of the obnoxious decree; and that the declaration in regard to Holland could not be relied upon. The *whole tenor*, in short, of the answer returned by *the British Government*, seemed to indicate their

fixed determination to wage war upon France, if any attempt were made upon the Low Countries.

In the course of a few days, the Executive Council of France avowed to England, through their ambassador, their intention of opening the Scheldt, and keeping possession of the Netherlands, during the war carrying on in that quarter; and added, that if these explanations were not satisfactory, they were prepared for war. Towards the end of the year, the fury of the French people had reached such a height, that they finally tried the King, and sentenced him to die in the commencement of 1793. As soon as intelligence of this important event reached England, the British Government dismissed the French Ambassador; and on the 1st of February 1793, the French Government declared war against Great Britain and the United Provinces. The exertions of the French Convention, in the course of the year, were truly astonishing. After expelling the combined forces of Austria and Prussia, and besides maintaining a large army on the frontiers, they had a powerful fleet at Brest, with which they threatened to invade Britain. In these circumstances, the famous coalitions with the Continental Powers were formed, which constituted the prominent features of the late wars.

On the 21st of January 1794, the British Parliament met. It was fully expected that Mr Canning would have moved the Address, in answer to the King's Speech; but this duty devolved upon another. *The continuation of the war, which was the subject then under discussion, would have afforded ample scope for the display of the emi-*

ment talents of the young orator; but from some cause or other, he failed to take advantage of the opportunity. On the 31st, Mr Canning made his first speech in Parliament, in defence of the war, on the subject of the treaty with Sardinia. Mr Pitt moved a grant of 20,000*l.* to the King of Sardinia, with the view of enabling him to defend his dominions. When Mr Canning rose, all eyes were fixed on the young orator, and the most profound silence reigned in the House. His speech, though the question was by no means favourable to the exhibition of his talents, contained some passages equal in point of eloquence to the most splendid orations of his maturer years. So judiciously indeed did he handle the subject, that Ministers considered the assistance and support of his talents as no small accession to their party.

As a specimen of Mr Canning's first speech in Parliament, it will be sufficient to adduce the following passage. Speaking of the war, in reply to Mr Fox he said, " ' Not only is this a war against principles, but against the very best of principles, a war against freedom ! ' This is loudly and confidently asserted and is to be proved, we are told, from the circumstance of ministers having neglected to interfere concerning the partition of Poland. Had not ministers been actuated by a hatred of liberty on the one hand, and restrained by a love of despotism on the other, they could never have chosen to make war against France, rather than against the powers who had *partitioned Poland*. The authors of this *assertion affected to disregard, or disdained to consider the comparative distance of France and of Po-*

land, the relative importance of the two countries to us, the strength of the confederacy by which the latter was oppressed, and every other circumstance which should guide the discretion, or regulate the conduct, of every sober politician.

“ Well, I will put all these considerations out of the question ; I will admit, for a moment, that there was an equal necessity, equal call, for our exertions in both cases ; and then I will put the argument simply and solely on this ground :—if there be two powers who have equally offended you, and from whom, by war or by negotiation, you must seek redress ; if one of those powers, however in other respects odious and wicked in our eyes, cannot, however, be denied to have settled a responsible government, with which a negotiation may be easily and prudently carried on—while, on the other, however otherwise amiable and admirable, it must be admitted that there is no such thing, no safe or tangible means of negotiation—does it not seem a most unaccountable perverseness of judgment, which shall say, ‘ Negotiate with that party with which negotiation is impracticable ; go to war with that where negotiation would equally avail ; negotiate with France ; go to war with Austria, Russia, Prussia. Save the bond of the beggar, or throw the solvent debtor into gaol ! ’ ”

From the success of this first effort, the friends of Mr Canning expected that his voice would now be heard on every question of importance ; but in this they were disappointed, for he seldom spoke more than a few words, even on the most important subjects through the remainder of that Session. In the course of a few remarks which he made on

the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and other measures for the suppression of seditious meetings, he avowed his determination to follow implicitly the opinions of the Minister. This declaration was met by some sarcastic observations of Mr Courtney, which excited considerable merriment in the House at the expense of Mr Canning.

At the opening of the Session in 1795, the address in reply to the King's Speech was moved by Sir Francis Knatchbull, and seconded by Mr Canning. In the few words which he spoke on that occasion, he expressed himself decidedly against the conclusion of any treaty with France. Considerable difference of opinion on this subject existed throughout the country. The desire for peace, however, generally prevailed; and meetings were frequently held during the summer, to petition the Legislature to put a speedy termination to the war. Discontent, instead of being confined to that one point, was now openly expressed with all the proceedings of Government. A spirit of insubordination began to appear in various quarters, which was fostered by the societies instituted by the agents of the French Convention. The state of the country, in fact, previous to the opening of Parliament in October, was truly alarming. As his Majesty proceeded to the House of Lords, through the Park, his coach was surrounded on all sides by the populace, demanding peace and the dismissal of the Minister. These shameful outrages clearly indicated the state of public opinion in regard to the war.

Amid the feverish restlessness of the country at this period, Mr Canning remained a silent, though

not an uninterested spectator. His judicious and prudent support of the Administration, since his first appearance in Parliament, had excited in the mind of Mr Pitt so high an opinion of his talents, that in the course of this year he was appointed to the office of Under Secretary of State; and on the dissolution of Parliament, he was returned as member for the Treasury borough of Wendover. It might have been expected that, from the official situation to which he had been raised, he would have taken a greater share in the public discussions; but through the whole Session, his Parliamentary exhibitions were confined to some brief occasional explanations of the views of Ministers.

The first question of importance which called forth in its discussion the whole mental energy of the young Statesman, was the Slave-Trade, which came under the notice of Parliament in 1797. On this subject his opinions had, from his early days, been on the side of humanity; and he now advocated the cause of the Abolitionists, with a masculine eloquence which was scarcely equalled in the course of the debate. The topic was one on which, though he was under the painful necessity of opposing his early friend Mr Jenkinson, he enjoyed the rare gratification of contending by the side of Fox, Sheridan, and Burke. In the course of the year 1798, Mr Canning, along with Messrs Frere and Ellis, commenced the publication of the "Antijacobin Review, or Weekly Examiner." This work soon attained a popularity till that time unequalled in such productions. The *genius displayed in the pieces furnished by Mr Canning, and especially in the well-managed ridi-*

cule thrown over some of the opinions prevalent at that time, contributed in no slight degree to secure the popularity of the Review.

The next year a poem appeared, entitled "New Morality," which was soon recognised as having come from the pen of Mr Canning. This satire, which for wit and sarcastic pungency has few equals, could not, from its nature, outlive the period to which it was applicable. The foibles and peculiar opinions of the most celebrated characters of that time, are exhibited in a point of view so ridiculous, and yet so faithful, that the poem, on its first publication, must have been a work of no ordinary interest with the public.

In an early part of 1799, Mr Dundas appeared at the Bar of the House of Commons with a message from the King, recommending a Union of Great Britain with Ireland. This measure had been long thought advisable by many statesmen of both countries, and the present juncture appeared favourable for its accomplishment. The project, however, when discussed in the House of Commons, was warmly opposed by Mr Sheridan, on the ground that there was no desire for a Union manifested on the part of the people of Ireland. Mr Canning spoke at great length in favour of the Union, urging its expediency with masculine vigour and brilliant eloquence. It is almost unnecessary to add, that, in a few days after, the resolutions passed the House which constituted the basis of the Union.

The domestic happiness of Mr Canning was at this time completed by his marriage with Miss *Joan Scott*, the daughter of General Scott, and *sister-in-law* to the Duke of Portland. This union

which brought the Under Secretary an accession to his fortune, allied him also to one of the most influential families in the country. It was now certain that his eminent talents, supported by such powerful influence, would give him great weight in the councils of the nation. The conjugal felicity of Mr Canning and his lady were much enhanced, in the early part of the following year, by the birth of their first child, George Charles Canning. This interesting young man was prematurely cut off at the age of nineteen, on the 3d March 1820.

In the year 1801, the States of Europe assumed a most alarming position in regard to Great Britain. The war with France was still maintained with unabated ardour. Buonaparte had reached the zenith of his glory, and, by his resistless power, as well as by his artful policy, succeeded in exciting a secret, and, in several instances, an avowed disposition in his favour among the European governments. France concluded with Austria the treaty of Luneville in February 1801, and the Convention of the Northern Powers had been signed on the 19th December 1800. Prussia readily acceded to the Convention, and the Russian Emperor applied to the Courts of Portugal and Naples, urging them to close their ports against British vessels. The Western world also connected itself at the same time with the French Republic by a commercial treaty. Thus, Britain stood alone, threatened with a determined opposition from those very powers which, in the commencement of the war, had courted her alliance.

On the 1st of January 1801, the Union of

Great Britain and Ireland took effect, and the Imperial Parliament first assembled on the 22d. The Pitt administration, though very unpopular in the country, appeared to be firmly established in their places, both by the personal confidence and esteem of the King, and by the uniform support which they received in Parliament. It was the anxious wish of the Minister, that the war with France should be terminated, by the conclusion of a treaty, as soon as possible. He therefore used every exertion to place the public affairs in the best situation to treat for peace. In this, however, he was strenuously opposed by a considerable party in the country.

Mr Pitt now began to feel so much embarrassment on the subject of the Catholic claims, that he found it necessary to retire from office. To reconcile the Irish Catholics to a Union with Britain, he had pledged himself in some degree to bring forward this measure to the House of Commons as a measure of Government. Not perhaps sufficiently aware of his Majesty's deep-rooted aversion to the subject, he considered himself as now called upon to take some steps towards the fulfilment of his promise. A correspondence ensued between the King and his Minister, which, instead of producing conviction in either party, terminated in the dissolution of the Ministry. The contemplated changes in the Administration were first announced in the House of Lords by Lord Grenville, who, in his speech, distinctly attributed *the resignations* which had taken place to the *Catholic question*.

Mr Canning, who had always been favourable to the claims of the Catholics, retired from office

along with Mr Pitt. In the political papers which he inserted at that time in the *Antijacobin Review*, he exhibits nothing of that rapour which soon after characterized his opposition to the successors of the Pitt administration.

The new Ministry, which was headed by Mr Addington, late Speaker of the House of Commons, included several members of the former Cabinet. For some time Mr Pitt supported, and, it was even supposed secretly directed, the acts of the Addington administration, in hopes that its weakness would dissolve it in the course of a few months. The ardour, however, of Mr Pitt, and of the ex-ministers who adhered to him, soon cooled in proportion as the new Cabinet rose in popularity; and in a short time Pitt withdrew his support, while Mr Canning, Lord Grenville and others, became more violent in their abuse of Ministers, than those who occupied the benches of the Opposition. The late Under-secretary, in particular, seized every opportunity, both in and out of the House, to oppose and ridicule Addington. Though his summary of political affairs in the *Antijacobin* was still characterized by a spirit of uncommon mildness, he hesitated not in his speeches to declare the incapacity of Ministers. He endeavoured also to depreciate Addington, by extolling Pitt, and, on that occasion, he composed his much admired song, entitled, "*The Pilot that weather'd the Storm.*"

In the spring of 1801, a minister plenipotentiary from Britain was sent into the Baltic, along with a fleet, to compel Denmark to recede from the *Northern Alliance*, and grant a free passage through the Sound to the English fleet. No sooner were

the terms rejected, than the fleet, under the command of Lord Nelson, made a successful attack on the Danish fleet and the city of Copenhagen. The brilliant victory gained by the British on this occasion, viewed in connection with the accession of the Emperor Alexander to the throne of Russia, put a speedy termination to the Northern Alliance.

Throughout the summer and autumn, the attention of Ministers was directed to the adjustment of preliminaries of peace with France. The first movement towards an arrangement was made on the part of Britain, by Lord Hawkesbury, now Lord Liverpool, in a letter to M. Otto, dated the 21st of March, declaring the readiness of his Majesty to enter into a treaty with the French Government. The French Consul authorized his minister to express, in reply to this communication, his satisfaction with the proposal, and to suggest, as a preliminary, the immediate suspension of hostilities both by sea and land. To this measure the British Government could not possibly accede; but after having spent several months in correspondence upon the subject, the ministers plenipotentiary met on the 7th of September, and the preliminary articles were finally arranged.

In the opening of the Session, which took place on the 20th October, his Majesty announced the signature of the preliminary treaty with France. This subject excited considerable discussion, at which, however, Mr Canning was not present. The conduct of Ministers in this case was warmly *approved*, both by Mr Pitt and Mr Fox, though *on different grounds*; but Lord Grenville and his

party joined Mr Windham in reprobating the peace.

The Ministry were extremely anxious, if possible, that a definitive arrangement with France should be made; and accordingly, the Marquis Cornwallis was sent to Paris, with full power to negotiate in name of the English Government. To such an extent were the negotiations protracted, that the British ministers had little hope of obtaining a permanent peace. At length, on the 27th March 1802, the definitive treaty was signed at Amiens. The parties in this treaty were, on the one side, the French Republic, the King of Spain, and the Batavian Republic, and on the other, the King of Great Britain and Ireland.

On the 13th May, the peace of Amiens, as it is termed, came under discussion in Parliament, when a most interesting and animated debate ensued. The speech of Mr Windham, in condemnation of the treaty, was peculiarly eloquent and energetic, objecting to it, on the ground that sacrifices had been made to France, without any compensation. In reply to Mr Windham, Lord Hawkesbury, in behalf of Ministers, entered into a full defence of the treaty, in a speech which was considered superior even to that of his antagonist.

Since his resignation Mr Canning had taken less interest than usual in Parliamentary affairs. But as a friend to the abolition of the Slave Trade, he was deeply interested in one part of the late treaty, the cession of Trinidad to Great Britain. This circumstance appeared to hold out an opportunity of effecting his favourite object in that island at least; and he therefore lost no time in making

a motion on the subject, the purport of which was to “ prevent the importation of Slaves into Trinidad, until Parliament shall have made provision for the prohibition, limitation, or regulation of the importation of negroes into that island.”

Parliament was dissolved on the 29th of June 1802. The Addington Administration was at that time at the height of its popularity, and therefore required to exert no undue influence to procure the return of members favourable to their interests. In the new elections which took place in the course of the summer, Mr Canning was chosen Member for the Borough of Tralee.

On the 13th November, the second Imperial Parliament was opened by his Majesty in person. In the debate upon the Address, Mr Canning stated at considerable length, and with the utmost freedom, his distrust of Ministers ; and, at the same time, warmly defended the last Administration, which Mr Fox had attacked in the course of the discussion. Through the whole of this Session, Ministers met with a decided and powerful opponent in Mr Canning. The principal occasion, however, on which he exposed their weakness was in the discussion on the army estimates, on the 8th December. After one of the most brilliant speeches which Sheridan ever delivered, Mr Canning addressed the House in a style full of eloquence and vigour ; and in the course of his remarks, asserted the utter incapacity of the existing administration to conduct the councils of the nation at such a crisis.

“ If I am pushed to the wall,” he said, “ and forced to speak my opinion, I have no disguise nor reservation ; I do think that this is a time when

the administration should be in the ablest and fittest hands; I do not think the hands in which it is now placed answer to that description; I do not pretend to conceal in what quarter I think that fitness most eminently resides; I do not subscribe to the doctrines which have been advanced, that in times like the present, the fitness of individuals for their political situation is no part of the consideration, to which a member of parliament may fairly turn his attention. I know not a more solemn or important duty that a member of parliament can have to discharge, than by giving at fit seasons a free opinion upon the character and qualities of public men. Away with the cant of 'measures not men!' the idle supposition, that it is the harness and not the horses that draw the chariot along! No, Sir, if the comparison must be made, if the distinction must be taken, men are every thing, measures comparatively nothing. I speak, Sir, of times of difficulty and danger; of times when systems are shaken, when precedents and general rules of conduct fail. Then it is, that not to this or that measure, however prudently devised, however blameless in execution, but to the energy and character of individuals, a State must be indebted for its salvation. Then it is that kingdoms rise or fall in proportion as they are upheld, not by well-meant endeavours, (laudable though they may be) but by commanding over-awing talents; by able men. And what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France, and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is. A man. *You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable before the date of Buonaparte's*

government ; that he found in her great physical and moral resources ; that he had but to turn them to account. True, and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France, with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Buonaparte ; but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendant of his genius. Tell me not of his measures and his policy. It is his genius, his character that keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to curb, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart. But for the purpose of coping with Buonaparte, one great commanding spirit is worth them all. This is my undisguised opinion. But when I state my opinion thus undisguisedly, is my Right Honourable friend (Mr Pitt) to be implicated in a charge of prompting what I say ? Sir, I wish not to speak of myself ; but I must say thus much, we are both above such a suspicion. Such, however, is the charge brought against him, accompanied and aggravated by another not less disgraceful to him, of guiding at a distance, in secrecy and irresponsibility, the measures of the Government, and thus playing one part of his friends against the other. Of all the imputations to which that Right Honourable Gentleman could be subjected, I confess I did think that of intrigue and cabal the least likely to be preferred against him by any man who has witnessed his public conduct. Is there any thing in the life of that Right Honourable gentleman,—*is there any thing in the last years of his life, to justify such an accusation ?* No, Sir. The

other charge, that of guiding the administration, it is not for me to answer; but it is one no less grave and serious in itself, and requires a no less distinct and peremptory refutation. And I do trust, that his Majesty's Ministers will feel the strongest anxiety to remove an imputation equally discreditable to him and to themselves."

In the opening of 1803, the country was in a state of painful suspense in regard to the important question of war or peace; but it was generally feared that in a short time a new rupture with France would take place. This suspicion was too soon realised, for on the 8th of March, his Majesty sent down a message to the House of Commons, announcing that in the threatening aspect of affairs, he had judged it expedient to adopt additional measures of precaution for the security of his dominions. The address in reply to this message was moved by Mr Addington, and the speech of Mr Canning was judicious and forcible. Though the motion of Ministers pledging the House to support his Majesty met with considerable opposition, ten thousand additional seamen were voted to enable the King to fulfil his purpose.

As soon as the King's message had reached Paris, the French Government assured the English ambassador, that its intentions were pacific, but scarcely two days had elapsed when the Ambassador was publicly insulted at the Court of the Tuilleries. The hostile designs of the Consul now became evident; and the English Government still anxious to preserve peace, tendered an ultimatum in regard to the evacuation of Malta, *which was the ostensible ground of offence.* No reply, however, was given to the proposal, and the

English ambassador having demanded his passports, quitted Paris in the middle of May.

Immediately on the arrival of the ambassador in London, the entire state of affairs in regard to France, and the conduct of Ministers during the negotiations, was brought under the notice of Parliament. The war was ably supported by Mr Pitt, and opposed with equal ability by Mr Fox ; but so great an alteration had the opinions of the country undergone in relation to the war, that the motion made to express approbation of the conduct of Ministers, found a minority of only ten members in the Upper, and sixty-seven in the Lower House.

A motion was made in the beginning of June by Colonel Patten, formally censuring the administration as having deceived the nation and betrayed its interests, by holding out the expectation of peace, when they knew that France was pursuing a systematic course of aggression. It was on this occasion that Mr Pitt first declared his distrust of Ministers ; but as he was unwilling to proceed with so great severity as the motion implied, he moved an adjournment. A negotiation had been entered into in the month of April to bring him into office, which however, had proved unsuccessful ; and from that time his hostility to the Addington administration was occasionally displayed.

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it impracticable. His Majesty was extremely averse to the admission of Mr Fox into the Cabinet ; and Lord Grenville declined the proposals of Mr Pitt, on the ground that he could never take part in an administration which was formed on a principle of exclusion. In the new arrangement, Mr Canning having consented to take office, was appointed Treasurer of the Navy. The administration, when completed, was not altogether in accordance with his wishes ; but he publicly declared, that though disappointed, “ he should not relinquish any part he was called on to act, because it might chance to be an arduous one. ”

The first object to which the new Ministers directed their attention, was the condition of the military establishments. A bill was brought forward by Mr Pitt on the 5th of June for raising and supporting an additional military force. This measure was evidently called for by the menacing attitude of Buonaparte, who had just reached the summit of his ambition, having been proclaimed Emperor by the French. This bill, though acknowledged as necessary by Mr Windham and Mr Fox, was keenly opposed by the late Ministers, and defended by Mr Canning with his usual ability and eloquence. In the remarks which Mr Pitt made on this occasion, he adverted with considerable warmth to the combination which had been formed against him, before he had carried into effect any one measure, either good or bad. The Grenville party had connected itself with Mr Fox and his friends, before the new Cabinet was formed ; and, supported as they occasionally were by *Mr Addington* and his adherents, they consti-

tional and opposition which ministerial influence could sensibly overcome.

The topic which, in the Session of 1805, chiefly occupied the attention of Parliament, was the trial of Viscount Melville, then first Lord of the Admiralty. That nobleman was charged with having received large sums of the public money as Treasurer of the Navy, which he had applied to his own use. Mr Canning exerted himself with great vigour in defence of his friend and predecessor. Undaunted amid the powerful opposition which he was called upon to encounter, and undismayed by the odium which necessarily attached to him in such a cause, he stood manfully forward, under a settled conviction of Lord Melville's innocence, in vindication of his former coadjutor. After having listened with indignation to repeated attacks on the character of his Lordship, without any opportunity having been given of exculpating himself, Mr Canning voted, as a last resource, in favour of the impeachment, which was moved by Mr Whitbread on the 11th of June. His Lordship, it is well known, was accordingly tried in Westminster Hall in the following year, and acquitted, by a large majority, on all the charges.

The death of Mr Pitt which happened on the 23d of January 1806, excited the deep regret of all parties in the country. In a few days after his decease, a motion was made for the payment of his debts. This proposal called forth a warm eulogium from his enlightened and generous opponent Mr Fox, in the course of which, while he expressed his admiration of the disinterestedness

and other eminent qualities of the late Premier, took a candid review of his political services, expressing, of course, his disagreement with him on several important points. Throughout the whole of his speech, Mr Fox showed the utmost respect to the memory of his late rival; though, for the sake of political consistency, and in answer to the remarks which had already been made by several members, he found it necessary to animadvert on his public acts. Mr Canning, however, with an intemperance which certainly was not expected on such an occasion, addressed the House in reply to Mr Fox, demanding the payment of Mr Pitt's debts solely on the ground of his *public services*. "I protest," said he, "against the mode in which the honourable gentlemen give their support to the motion. I wish to restore to them the benefit of that consistency which they labour so much to reconcile with the support they give. I give credit to him who refuses his consent because he does not see merit; but I cannot see the ground on which those opposite follow a distinct course. If the sum is to be given as an eleemosynary grant, without any distinctions of merit or demerit, I disdain it. Those who do not vote for it on the ground of Mr Pitt's merits, had better oppose it openly. It is only as a tribute to great merits that I will receive it; and if any one supports it on any other ground than as a testimony and a reward for those merits, I wish him to withdraw his support, and preserve his consistency by opposing it." The rashness of this conduct may, *perhaps*, be excused, on the ground, that regard *to the political fame of his late friend and patron*, hurried Mr Canning beyond the bounds of pru-

done. In proof of his respect for the character of Mr. Pitt, it may be observed, that a short time after the decease of that illustrious man, he published an elegant and faithful view of his character, his excellencies as a man, an orator, and a statesman.

By the death of the Premier, the Ministry was, of course, dissolved, and the power fell into the hands of their opponents. It was generally expected that Mr Fox would have been raised to the head of the Administration; but he preferred the Foreign Secretaryship, that he might effect, if possible, his favourite object,—a peace with France. Lord Grenville, therefore, was appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and empowered to construct a new Cabinet. Mr Canning, of course, retired from office, and his place was occupied by his early friend Mr Sheridan.

This Administration, to which the name of “All the Talents” was given, in truth by their friends, and in derision by their enemies, was still more bitterly opposed by Mr Canning than even the Addington ministry. Both in his Parliamentary speeches, and in some satires published at that time, a coarseness of sarcasm and invective prevailed, which strikingly displayed his deep-rooted hostility to the opponents of Mr Pitt’s public measures.

In the construction of the new Administration, Lord Ellenborough had been nominated to the office of Lord Chief-Justice, with a seat in the Cabinet. It was regarded as quite unconstitutional and, except in the case of Lord Mansfield, unprecedented, that a Chief-Justice should at the same time be a Cabinet minister. The subject,

of course, came under the notice of Parliament, and Mr Canning opposed the nomination, in a speech full of enlarged views and liberal sentiments, in the course of which, he displayed a profound knowledge of the fundamental principles of the British constitution. It was certainly by no means creditable to Mr Fox that he lent his aid to the support of such a measure.

As the power of France was every day becoming more alarming, the Ministry early directed their attention to an improved organization of the military system of the country. With this view, in the end of April, a motion was made for the repeal of the Additional Force Bill, which had been framed by Mr Pitt. Mr Windham, who was then Secretary for the War Department, took the opportunity, at the same time, of bringing forward his plan for improving the regular army, by the substitution of a limited for an unlimited term of service, and by granting a small increase of pay at the expiration of the prescribed term. Mr Canning spoke on this occasion with his usual ability against the motion, and proposed an amendment, which, however, was negatived. At the close of the discussion, Mr Fox made a few animadversions on the dexterity with which Mr Canning had evaded the consideration of the question then before the House, to which Mr Canning replied with a severity and vigour which displayed a determined opposition to the measures of Ministers.

Towards the end of the following month, on the principle of limited service being introduced into the Mutiny Bill, Mr Canning again attacked *the measures of Mr Windham as ridiculous and visionary.* In his eyes, in short, the only practi-

cable and useful arrangements in regard to the army, were those which had been formerly introduced by Mr Pitt. But there can be little doubt that, had the plan of limited service been tried for some time, it would have produced a decided improvement in the organization of the army. The same subject was again brought forward on the 7th of June; and, in the course of his remarks, Mr Canning made a violent attack on the Administration. The subject, however, which put his party spirit to the test, was the Slave Trade Abolition Bill, which was the glory of this transient Ministry, and the last public act of Mr Fox. It might have been expected that Mr Canning, from the enthusiasm which he had hitherto displayed in advocating this measure, would have hailed its introduction, even by his political opponents, as the triumph of the cause of humanity. But it is painful to be obliged to state, that, instead of a speech on a subject, which would not long before have roused into action the whole energy of his soul, he contented himself with a few brief remarks, coldly expressive of his approbation of the measure. "I think it impossible for the ingenuity of man to devise a form of words, contributing to the repeal of the Slave Trade, that I would not concur in. I lament, however, that the House has not the subject fully before them; and I cannot refrain from blaming his Majesty's Ministers for not bringing it more tangibly and efficiently forward, during the vacant interval that presented itself between the recess and the time that the Right Honourable Secretary (Mr Wyndham) brought forward his military plan." It was

on this occasion that Mr Fox uttered those ever-memorable words, which reflect the highest honour on that great statesman. "So fully am I impressed with the vast importance and necessity of attaining what will be the object of my motion this day, that if, during the almost forty years that I have now had the honour of a seat in Parliament, I had been so fortunate as to accomplish that, and that only, I should think I had done enough, and should retire from public life with comfort, and conscious satisfaction that I had done my duty."

During the remainder of the Session Mr Canning attacked Ministers with unabated vigour. The chief subject of importance which came under discussion was the "American Intercourse Bill," which was ably supported by the Attorney-General. In its principal objects the measure was unexceptionable, as authorizing the Governors of Colonies to do what they had already frequently done, without asking for indemnity; but moderate as it might appear, the Bill met with violent opposition, both in and out of the House, and had a considerable tendency in rendering the Ministry unpopular. Mr Canning was its most violent opponent; and his speech on that occasion is one of the best which he ever delivered in Parliament.

In the course of the summer, Mr Fox, desirous of restoring peace, embraced the earliest opportunity of entering into a negotiation with France. For this purpose Lords Yarmouth and Lauderdale were sent to Paris. While these negotiations were in progress, Mr Fox was seized with an *alarming illness*, which, in a few months, terminated his life. The loss which the country sus-

ained by his death, was deeply felt. Mr Fox was, perhaps, the most enlightened, upright and consistent statesman which Britain ever saw. By the gigantic strength of his intellect, the generosity of his heart, the integrity of his public character, his patriotism and love of liberty, he stood unrivalled among all his contemporaries. For nearly forty years he had held a seat in Parliament, and during the whole of that long period scarcely a single instance of political inconsistency can be laid to his charge. From the beginning to the termination of his course, he continued the manly defender of the liberty of the people, and the principles of the British Constitution. As a man, his gentleness of disposition and artless simplicity of manner, endeared him to all his friends and acquaintances ; as an orator, his eloquence was resistless and overwhelming ; and as a statesman, his penetrating judgment, his liberality of sentiment, and uncompromising dignity of character, called forth the respect and admiration, even of his keenest political opponents. It is impossible to delineate the character of Fox better than has already been done by one who knew him well, Sir James Mackintosh. “ He will most certainly command the unanimous reverence of future generations, by his pure sentiments towards the commonwealth, by his zeal for the civil and religious rights of all men, by his liberal principles favourable to mild government, to the unfettered exercise of the human faculties, and the progressive civilization of mankind ; by his ardent love for a country of *which the well-being and greatness were indeed inseparable* from his own glory ; *and by his profound reverence for that free con*

stitution which he was universally admitted to understand better than any other person of his age; both in an exactly legal, and in a comprehensively philosophical sense." Such is an outline, faithful and just, of the character of Fox, drawn by a man who is himself justly considered as one of the most learned, able, enlightened, and upright public men of the present day.

In consequence of the death of Mr Fox, Lord Howick was appointed to the office of Foreign Secretary, Lord Sidmouth to the Presidency of the Council, and Lord Holland, the only new member admitted into the Administration, to the office of Lord Privy Seal. Ministry had dissolved Parliament in the summer, that they might secure a preponderating number of members attached decidedly to their interests. Writs for the new election were issued in October, when the public mind was in a state of considerable excitation by the recal of the British Ambassador from the French capital.

The new Parliament met on the 15th of December, and was opened by commission. When the Address was moved and seconded, Mr Canning rose, and proceeded at some length to attack the present, and eulogize the late ministry. In the conclusion of his speech, instead of moving an amendment on the address, he produced a new address, which he submitted to the House, without however pressing it to a division.

In the beginning of January 1807, the late negotiations with France were laid before the House, and an address moved upon them by Lord Howick. *In the commencement of his speech he made a most affecting and beautiful eulogium on*

taken the liberty to make, in pointing out
ors of Ministers in dwelling upon what (if
at all) are represented as merely slips in
claration, persons who have taken that part
een guilty of petty cavilling, and have ex-
he weakness of their own cause. Cause?
ause? I have no cause in this business,
cause of my country. I know not how I
ter serve that, than by inquiring into the
which it has been managed by those who
ad the conduct of it; and if it has in any
on misconducted, it is better that we should
t the fault ourselves, than leave it to the
on and comments of the enemy. But it
indeed be a mismanagement beyond any
but I have dreamt of imputing to Ministers,
uld so far change the respective positions
nd our enemy as to put him wholly in the
nd us in the wrong. Pity it is, if, in any
rticular, appearances have been suffered to
not us. It is for that reason that the *slips*
claration (if such they be) are to be

grand scheme for its accomplishment, "the Education Bill," they were defeated by the influence of Lord Hawkesbury, now Lord Liverpool. Of the beneficial effects of the "Limited Term of Service Bill," on the organization of the army, it is impossible to speak, as the plan never underwent a fair trial. One great question was with them indispensable to the happiness of Britain, but especially of Ireland; and in their anxiety to accomplish that grand object, they were compelled to retire from office. The Catholic Question they considered as a matter of right, as well as of necessity; and no desire for office prevented them from persisting in their attempts to bring the subject under the serious consideration of Parliament and the country. Their schemes, it is true, were frustrated by the will of the Sovereign; but their glorious struggles in behalf of the liberty of the subject, even when opposed to the will of the King and the prejudices of the public, reflect the highest honour on that enlightened Cabinet.

Towards the end of March, the new administration was formed, headed by the Duke of Portland, who, it is remarkable, never appeared in Parliament as a minister. Lord Castlereagh was appointed to the Colonial, Lord Hawkesbury to the Home, and Mr Canning to the Foreign Departments. Mr Percival was made Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Eldon resumed the Seals. On this occasion Mr Sheridan's son, who had been Muster-Master-General for Ireland under the late Administration, was compelled to resign; but by the influence of Mr Canning, he was restored to his office. Parliament met by adjournment on the 8th of April, and the first subject which occupied their

attention, was a motion which was made by Mr Brand, "That it is contrary to the first duties of the confidential servants of the Crown, to restrain themselves by any pledge, expressed or implied, from offering to the King any advice which the course of circumstances might require." In his speech, the mover gave a manly vindication of the Grenville Administration, while he severely attacked their successors. A keen discussion ensued, in the course of which, it was denied by none of the Ministers that such a pledge had been given, as that on which the motion was founded. Mr Canning entered, though at a late hour, into an able and eloquent defence of himself and his colleagues. His task was by no means easy; for on him rested almost solely the duty of opposing a party, which, besides including men of the most eminent talents, ranked among its supporters all the wealthiest and most influential families in the country. The weakness of the Ministerial party was clearly displayed in the first trial of their strength, the motion of Mr Brand having been negatived by a majority of only thirty-two. Ministers, conscious of their insecurity, determined to resort to the expedient of dissolving Parliament, that they might exert the Government influence in the new elections. The dissolution of Parliament accordingly took place on the 27th April.

The new Parliament met on the 22d of June, and the address, in answer to the speech, was carried in both Houses by large majorities. In the House of Commons, however, an angry discussion took place, chiefly in regard to the late dissolution. *The remarks of Mr Wyndham* were manly

and vigorous. He dwelt on the meanness of the Ministry in attempting to make the tide of popularity run in their favour, by raising during the elections the despicable cry of "No Popery." Mr Canning, in his reply, exhibited that ingenuity and adroitness, which, during the existence of the Portland Ministry, uniformly characterized his speeches in their defence. His remarks in the discussion which took place, in regard to the Finance Committee on the 10th of June, were peculiarly caustic and insolent. This called forth from Mr Curwen an allusion to his pension, which he frankly avowed as having received from Mr Pitt and Lord Grenville, when he resigned the office of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs; at the same time stating, that he had reserved one half for his own use, and settled the other half on two near and dear relations, who were dependent on him for support. Nothing of importance occurred during the remainder of that Session, which terminated on the 14th of August.

The relative position of the Continental States, in regard to Britain, was at this period by no means favourable. With the exception of Denmark, which professed a neutrality, England was connected in alliance with Sweden alone of all the European governments. The Russian Emperor, by the secret treaty of Tilsit, had joined France; and by stipulations of the same treaty, it was intended to capture the Danish and Portuguese fleets. To prevent this measure from being carried into effect, Mr Jackson was instructed, by the British Government, to demand from the Prince *Royal of Denmark* an explanation of the intentions of that Court, and he was also empowered to

to pledge, that these intentions, if not
could be executed, by the delivery of the
lost into the possession of the British Ad-
miral under the most solemn stipulation that it
be restored at the conclusion of the war be-
tween Britain and France. Should this de-
mand be refused, the British Government was de-
termined to enforce it by the fleet assembled in
the Sound. The result of this negotiation, was a
pledge on the part of the Danish Government to
restore the city of Copenhagen; in consequence of which, the city
was subjected to a bombardment, the
Danish fleet was seized.

As to Portugal, however, Buonaparte
showed much more decision. He detained its
ships in the ports of France, and demanded
that she should shut its ports against Britain. The
Government of that country, intimidated by the
military authority which Buonaparte had begun
to exercise over them, left Portugal in November
1807.

The second Session of Parliament met on the
January 1808, and was opened by a speech
of some length on the bombardment of Co-
penhagen, and the seizure of the Danish fleet; on
the relations of Britain with Russia, Austria, and
the departure of the Royal Family of
Portugal for Brazil, and the Orders of Council in
respect to the vessels of neutral States. In the de-
livering of the address, the policy of Ministers chiefly
directed to the Copenhagen expedition, was at-
tacked with virulence by some of the opposition
Members, on the ground that it was a disgraceful
provoked attack on a neutral power. In a
debate after the recess, the same subject was

again brought forward in a motion by Mr Ponsonby, for the production of all the papers respecting the secret articles of the treaty, the destruction of the Danish fleet, &c. Mr Canning, on this occasion, was the champion of Ministers, and the ability and eloquence of his vindication excited the admiration of both sides of the House. He was accused, however, with some justice, of having made garbled extracts from papers in his possession, which tended to give a false colouring to the question before the House; and his defence of himself, instead of proving satisfactory, only led to a more violent attack upon his honour by Mr Whitbread, in which he threatened to move for a vote of censure on the Foreign Secretary, "for never," he remarked, "was censure so abundantly merited."

A discussion soon after took place on the Orders in Council, which had appeared in the end of the previous year. The orders expressed the determination of Government to regard France and all its dependencies as in a state of blockade, and to seize all vessels which attempted to trade from any neutral port to those countries, or from them to any neutral port. They also directed, that all neutral vessels intended for a French or hostile port, should touch first at Great Britain, from which, after paying certain duties, they would in some cases be allowed to proceed; and in all cases, they were enjoined to come to Great Britain, when clearing out with a cargo from any port of the enemy. In the discussion which ensued on *these orders*, Mr Canning spoke at great length, *and contended keenly* in favour of a clause for the *exclusion of Jesuit's bark* from France, which was

ct, to which Mr Canning was under the pain-
necessity of replying. Always unwilling di-
y to oppose his early friend, the Foreign Se-
ry treated him in his speech on this occasion
the utmost respect, and indeed the whole
of his remarks is evidently more moderate
subdued than before. In his anxiety to ex-
te himself from the imputations which had
cast upon his character, Mr Canning was
ed to endure the mortification of proposing
next night, the same motion which he had so
and so obstinately resisted. This conduct
d forth the severe reprobation of several Op-
ion Members, but particularly of Mr Tierney.
he question in regard to the documents was
however, set at rest by their production on
able of the House. The law of Parliament
gard to papers, was brought under the notice
se House by Mr Adam. In the speech with
h he prefaced his resolutions on this subject.

principle, contained an evident censure on the conduct of Mr Canning; and he therefore found himself called upon, to address the House in his defence. He chiefly rested his vindication on precedents, of which he produced several; and in the conclusion of his address he observed, that a high criminal accusation had been made against him; and therefore, to allow unrestrained discussion, he would withdraw, which he accordingly did. Mr Adam rose, and replied to the speech of the Foreign Secretary with great warmth, opposing to his long list of precedents, the strong and irrefragable argument, that his conduct had been contrary to the principles of the British Constitution.

The Ministry were constantly harassed, at this period, by the repeated demands of the Opposition for papers, which it was inconvenient for them to give. Mr Canning, in particular, felt keenly the suspicion and want of confidence which was implied in such demands; and accordingly, on a motion having been made by Mr Whitbread for the production of papers relative to Russia, the Foreign Secretary threatened to resign his office if the motion was carried.

“He would fairly state (said Mr Canning), that he had hitherto abstained from speaking on the subject, because whatever might have been the course of the debate, if it had been possible that the argument of the honourable gentleman should have influenced the House, or that the arguments of his noble friend should not have influenced the House on what he conceived to be *the clear question* before them; if the inclination *of the House* had shown itself to be unfavourable

in him that confidence, without which it was
sible for him adequately to fulfil the duties
situation, they would permit him to retire,
ing his honour. Not one spark of that ho-
should he conceive be retained, if he were to
re that which, at the time it was communi-
and since, and now, he felt, was communi-
in confidence. Under that impression, how-
great the deference which he entertained for
louse, and however anxious he was to bow
ir decision, were that decision to call for the
ction of the paper in question, he would ra-
near their displeasure than thus compromise
vn honour and character."

might have been expected that an Adminis-
n which had to encounter an opposition so
rful, both in talent and influence, would have
peculiarly cautious in its operations. But,
determined to excite hostility, they drew
upon themselves the just resentment of their

this subject from several of his colleagues, appeared anxious to evade the discussion of the question.

Buonaparte, during the summer, had seized the Spanish Crown. Having allured the Royal Family to Bayonne, he procured from Charles IV. and Ferdinand a formal resignation of their right to the crown. A general insurrection of the people took place in Madrid on the departure of the Royal Family from that city; and it was with difficulty, and not without much carnage, that the French soldiers in the town, amounting to 10,000, succeeded in restoring tranquillity. On the 4th May, a Royal Edict was set forth at Bayonne, declaring the Grand Duke of Berg, Viceroy of all Spain. A Junta was convened at that place, to fix the form of a new Government; and by the influence of the French Emperor they at length, on the 17th of July, elected Joseph Buonaparte for their King. The new Sovereign entered Madrid on the 20th of the same month, attended by the members of the Junta and a large guard of soldiers. France appeared to have now established a military despotism in the Peninsula; but, ere long, the oppressed Spaniards, fired with patriotism, rose against the French intruders. The insurrection soon became general. In Asturias, especially, it had been so fully organized that two noblemen were despatched to England to request assistance. On their arrival in London, the deputies were received with cordiality, and an assurance given them of prompt and efficient succour.

Mr Sheridan first introduced the subject of Spanish politics to the attention of Parliament.

ga Secretary was in the best spirit, and com-
munity to his early friend Mr Sheridan. It is
eable, indeed, to peruse his remarks on that
on, without perceiving that he had imbibed
tion of those patriotic sentiments which fell
ten from the lips of both Fox and Burke.
knew nothing of Mr Canning, who imagined
to ever forgot those friends of his youth, or
high toned liberality of opinion, which they
ed into his mind, and which occasionally
forth even at the most unexpected seasons.
The speech of my right honourable friend
for such a disclosure of the sentiments of his
esty's Ministers, as may be made without
d, without a dishonourable compromise, and
at exciting expectations which may never be
ed. It is therefore I declare, to the House
o the country, that his Majesty's Ministers
vith as deep and lively an interest as my right
rable friend the noble advocate which a part

whether professing insidious peace, or declaring open war, is the common enemy of all nations, whatever may be the existing political relations of that nation with Great Britain, becomes instantly our essential ally. In that event, his Majesty's Ministers will have three objects in view. The first, to direct the united efforts of the two countries against the common foe; the second, to direct those efforts in a way which shall be most beneficial to the new ally; the third, to direct them in a manner conducive to peculiarly British interests. But, Sir, of those objects, the last will be out of the question, as compared with the other two. These are the sentiments, with which his Majesty's government are inspired. To the measures which these sentiments may dictate, they confidently look for the support of Parliament and of the country. It cannot, Sir, be expected that I should say whether we think the crisis arrived, or whether we anticipate its speedy approach, when the sentiments which I have described must be called into action. It is sufficient that I have stated what we feel, and what we intend."

The Spanish patriots, resisted the usurpation of France with considerable success. They captured, on the 14th of June, a French squadron which was lying in the harbour of Cadiz, and, in the subsequent month, they besieged Saragossa; but their most important advantage was the victory over Dupont, who surrendered with twelve thousand men. In the western provinces, however, they suffered a signal defeat. The British Government, in fulfilment of the promise which it *had made to the Spanish deputies*, despatched *into Spain an army under the command of Sir*

Arthur Wellesley, now Duke of Wellington. On their arrival, they were not a little retarded in their operations by the jealousy of the Spanish authorities. But at length the gallant General gained a decisive victory at Vimeira, which was speedily followed by the expulsion of the French from Lisbon. In two days after, the Convention of Cintra was signed.

In the mean time, an effort was made by Buonaparte, in conjunction with the Emperor of Russia, with whom he had previously met in conference at Erfurth, to draw Britain into a negotiation. His Majesty, aware of the real intention of this diplomatic artifice, expressed his readiness to enter into such a negotiation with his allies, among whom he included the Spanish nation. The reply of the French Emperor was a decided refusal to admit the existing Spanish Government as a party in any negotiation. On the 15th December, accordingly, a declaration was published by his Majesty, in which he deeply lamented the failure of an attempt to bring about a general peace, but at the same time stated his determination to aid the Spanish people in asserting their just and natural rights.

Towards the end of this year, the Spanish patriots received the most efficient assistance from John Moore, who advanced into Spain; and having successfully evaded the attempts of Buonaparte to cut off his retreat, he fell back upon Bruna, where he fought the celebrated battle of Corunna.

In the opening speech at the first meeting of the next Session of Parliament, on the 13th January 1809, the same sentiments were repeated

as on the 15th December ; and it was still farther stated, that the connexion with Spain had assumed the form of an alliance. For some time the principal topics of discussion were the failure of the campaign, and the retreat of the British army. The Opposition attributed the ill success of the expedition to the defective arrangements of Ministers, as to the course which the army should pursue on their arrival. In the discussion on the Convention of Cintra, which was conducted with great spirit, Sir Arthur Wellesley gave a satisfactory explanation of his own conduct. The speech of Mr Windham on that occasion, was peculiarly animated and energetic.

The public mind was, at this time, directed from the affairs of Spain, by an accusation which was brought against the Duke of York, as Commander-in-chief, by Colonel Wardle. The evidence on which the charges were founded, had been obtained from Mrs Clarke, the forsaken mistress of his Royal Highness. Public feeling was strongly excited against the illustrious delinquent. It was unguardedly moved by Mr Perceval, who was not sufficiently aware of the extent of the proofs, that the Inquiry should be conducted by a Committee of the whole House. In the course of the examinations it was clearly proved, that Mrs Clarke had exerted her influence in obtaining commissions from the Duke, which she disposed of for money. The fact, however, that His Royal Highness was aware of the shameful traffic thus carried on, was by no means established. Mr Wardle moved, on the 8th of March, “the order of the day, for taking into consideration the Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the conduct of his Royal

ness the Commander-in-chief." The debate, the evidence which had been adduced, was continued from night to night, and a great variety of opinion prevailed in the House. The opinion of Mr. Canning, who addressed the House in reply to Mr. Wilberforce on the 14th, was decidedly in favour of the innocence of the accused in his official character. The levity, however, with which he treated a subject of such importance to the country, and the ridicule which he attempted to cast upon his opponents, was by no means consistent with the seriousness of the charges which he was endeavouring to combat. In the close of this protracted discussion, the House adopted a series of resolutions, expressive of the immorality of the Duke of York's connection with Mrs. Clarke, while they asserted their belief of his ignorance of the pecuniary abuse.

No sooner were the charges, against the Duke of York, finally disposed of, than another prosecution of a different nature came before the House, in which Lord Castlereagh was accused of having exchanged a writership in Bengal, for the return of a member to Parliament. The charge was admitted by his Lordship; and on the 25th of April, Lord Archibald Hamilton moved a resolution of censure, which Ministers met by moving the previous question. In voting for the latter motion, Mr. Canning remarked, that he must not be understood as denying the serious importance of the case. The order of the day was negatived, when Mr. Canning moved, "that the House, on considering the whole of the case, saw no necessity for a *criminating* resolution, which was carried.

maintained his post, and shots would have been exchanged a third time, had not the seconds interposed on perceiving that Mr Canning was wounded. Thus the affair terminated ; but Lord Castlereagh still retained a deep-rooted hostility to his antagonist.

In consequence of this unhappy disagreement, the two Secretaries resigned ; the Duke of Portland, worn out with age and infirmity, retired at the same time ; and thus the Portland Administration was dissolved. It now became a matter of considerable difficulty to construct a new Cabinet. Mr Percival, whom his Majesty now raised to the Premiership, addressed letters to Earl Gray and Lord Grenville, stating that his Majesty had authorized Lord Liverpool and himself to communicate with them for the purpose of forming an extended and combined Administration. Both, however, declined the honour. Application was then made to the Marquis of Wellesley, who accepted the office of Foreign Secretary, which had been vacated by Mr Canning. Mr Ryder received the Seals, and Lord Liverpool passed to the new department. Lord Castlereagh retired from office, loaded with all the odium which had accrued to him, from the failure of the Walcheren expedition. The Administration when completed, though by no means remarkable in point of talent, succeeded in obtaining and preserving a decided majority in both Houses.

On the 28th January 1810, the next session of Parliament opened, and the leading subject of discussion in the course of the session was the *Walcheren expedition*. Though no longer connected *officially with the Cabinet*, Mr Canning was still

considered by the Opposition, as in some degree responsible for that measure. A motion for inquiry in regard to the unfortunate expedition was carried, and accordingly an investigation was instituted, which lasted several weeks. The policy or impolicy of the measure was then discussed, when the former was carried by a majority. In the course of the debate, Mr Whitbread made a violent attack on Mr Canning, to which, however, he made no reply.

The Earl of Chatham, as one of the commanders in the late expedition to the Scheldt, thought proper to draw out a report of his proceedings on that occasion, and with a view to exculpate himself, blamed indirectly, at least, the naval commanders. This report the noble Earl transmitted to his Majesty, on the 14th February. As soon as the circumstance transpired, a motion was made by Mr Whitbread for an address to his Majesty, requesting copies of all papers which had been transmitted by the Earl of Chatham relative to the late expedition. This motion having been carried, an address was presented, in reply to which, his Majesty gave a full account of the circumstances. On the 2d of March, Mr Whitbread moved a resolution of censure on the Earl of Chatham; but after some discussion, he waved his motion in favour of a modification of it, suggested by Mr Canning. The resolution was then entered on the Journals of the House, and Lord Chatham immediately resigned his office of Master-general of the Ordnance.

Buonaparte appeared to keep chiefly in view this year, the great object of obtaining possession

of Portugal, and therefore Lord Wellington acted almost solely on the defensive. The principal circumstance, however, which claimed the attention of the British Government in the summer, was the assertion of their independence by some of the Spanish colonies in South America. In prosecution of their plans, the Junta of Caraccas had applied to the Governor of Curaçoa for assistance ; but as it was impossible for him to act, without authority from the British Government, to which that colony belonged, he immediately transmitted to London the request of the Junta. Lord Liverpool, in reply, addressed a letter to the Governor, dated June 29th, in which he stated, that his Majesty would discountenance any attempt, to separate the Spanish colonies from the mother country in Europe ; but should the designs of the French succeed in regard to Spain, he would think it his duty, to afford every kind of assistance to the provinces of America, that should render them independent of French Spain.

In the meantime, Buonaparte dethroned his brother King Louis of Holland, and annexed the Seven Provinces to the French empire. Piedmont also was attached to France ; possession was taken of the Hanse Towns, and of the whole coast from the Elbe to the Ems. The Electorate of France was annexed to the kingdom of Westphalia, while the Conscription Laws were extended to that and all the other kingdoms dependent on France. Bernadotte was this year elevated to the Crown Prince of Sweden.

The commercial differences which existed between Great Britain and America, were by no means adjusted. Mr Gallatin, the Treasurer of

the States, gave notice to the collectors of the customs, that the restrictions in regard to France were abolished, that country having revoked her edicts ; but that unless Great Britain also revoked her edict, they would remain in full force with regard to her, on the 2d of February next, and therefore subsequently to that day, British goods arriving would be forfeited.

Towards the end of the year, public anxiety was considerably awakened by the lamented death of the amiable Princess Amelia, and its melancholy consequences upon the King's mind. Parliament met in November, on account of his Majesty's mental indisposition, and frequent adjournments took place, in the vain hope of a recovery. At length on the 20th December, the establishment of a Regency was discussed, and it was finally determined that the Prince of Wales should be invested with that high office, during his father's illness. In the early part of 1811, Parliament were chiefly occupied in the consideration of those restrictions which ministers proposed to place upon the authority of the Regent. It was fully expected that resolutions so obnoxious to the Regent, when considered in connection with his early partialities, would have led him to change the Administration ; but his Royal Highness distinctly stated, in a letter to Mr Percival, that he retained the present ministers, solely from filial respect. The Opposition, therefore, viewing such a change as ultimately probable, were comparatively indifferent, to what they considered as a temporary arrangement. Throughout the Session, the principal topics of discussion were the state of Ireland, the depression of trade, and the state of the paper

currency. Mr Canning, though regular in his attendance on his parliamentary duties, seldom took a part in the debates.

The campaign in the Peninsula this year, conducted by Lord Wellington, did great honour to the consummate skill of that General. The measures pursued for the defence of Portugal, were eminently successful, while in Spain, the issue of the battle of Barrossa, gave the Spanish patriots confident hopes of success.

The disputes between Great Britain and the United States, were not yet settled, and every day the probability of a rupture, appeared to increase. It was announced indeed, at the meeting of Congress on the 4th November, that there was a necessity for the United States assuming an attitude of preparation for war. The commerce and possessions of the British in the East Indies, received also additional security, by the acquisition of the Islands of Bourbon and the Mauritius, and the settlement of Batavia.

As his Majesty still continued indisposed, the Session of Parliament was opened by a speech of the Prince Regent, on the 7th January 1812. The most important subject which came under discussion, was the state of Ireland. A motion was made by Lord Morpeth on the 3d of February, for an inquiry into the state of that country, chiefly with a view to the admission of the Catholics to their political rights. The subject awakened to their wonted energy the powers of Mr Canning, and his speech on that occasion, in *favour of Catholic Emancipation*, is one of the *most distinguished specimens of acute reasoning, and brilliant eloquence*, which, with the exception

of his oration on Portugal at a more recent period, he ever delivered in Parliament. His favourite object, however, was not gained, the motion having been negatived by a very large majority.

“What is the present condition of Ireland?” Mr Canning remarked in the course of his speech. “There is a great, an active, an intelligent population excluded from the pale of the Constitution, but to which great political privileges have been conceded;—which has been gradually advanced to the limits of the Constitution, and then told it must not hope to get into the enclosure—to be admitted into the political fold. This has been the course pursued during the reign of his present Majesty; and yet, according to my honourable and learned friend, the more you restrict, the more you quiet them;—yes, according to the proverb, “Dead men tell no tales.” The maxim and the adage may be alike carried too far. After having gone thus far,—after having thought it right to remove many of the restrictions to which the Catholics have been subjected, I for one, am not willing to declare, now, that in no time, and under no circumstances, I will proceed no further in the work of amelioration. After having, in reality, removed the disqualifications of the Catholics, I cannot admit the propriety of retaining the brand by which distrust has been marked.”

About this time, the Administration were considerably weakened by the resignation of the Marquis Wellesley. The ground on which he avowedly retired from office was, disagreement with his colleagues, *as to the scale on which the war in the Peninsula should be conducted.* He had ex-

pressed his intention of resigning on the 16th January, but as the year to which the restrictions on the Regency were limited was fast drawing to a close, his Royal Highness requested the Marquis to retain his office for a short time, and at the expiration of the restrictions, to give his opinion with regard to the principle on which a new Administration should be formed. He now therefore declared, that in his opinion "a Cabinet should be constructed on an intermediary principle, between immediate concession, and perpetual exclusion, with respect to the Roman Catholics; and on an understanding, that the war should be carried on with adequate vigour." He expressed at the same time his readiness "to serve *with* Mr Percival on such a basis, but never *under* him in any circumstances." Immediately after this, his resignation was accepted on the 19th of February.

The Prince Regent addressed a letter, dated the 13th of the same month, to his brother the Duke of York, in which he gave a distinct statement of his views respecting a New Administration. It was the ardent wish of his Royal Highness, that a few of his early friends, particularly Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, should form a coalition with the members of the existing Cabinet. This proposal, however, was declined by both these noble Lords, on the ground that such difference of opinion existed between them and the Ministers, in regard to the most important subjects, that a union was impossible. The Prince Regent, therefore, perceiving that his wishes could not be acceded to, found himself necessitated to *continue* the present system, when suddenly the *Administration* was dissolved by the assassination

of its leader Mr Percival. A maniac of the name of Bellingham had suffered severe pecuniary losses in Russia, for which he conceived Government should have compensated him ; and, enraged at the imaginary neglect with which he was treated, he resolved to murder, in revenge, some conspicuous member of the Cabinet. In pursuance of his deadly purpose, he shot Mr Percival as he was passing through the lobby of the House of Commons, on the 11th of May.

In a few days after this melancholy event, Mr Stuart Wortley moved, in the House of Commons, an Address to the Regent, praying him to take such steps as might be best calculated to form an efficient Administration. This resolution, which seemed to have been introduced as a trial of strength between the different parties, was carried, after a long debate, by a majority of four. In reply to the Address, the Regent stated, that he would take the subject into his serious and immediate consideration. The first step which was taken by his Royal Highness in the construction of a new Cabinet, was a request, transmitted to Lord Liverpool, that he would communicate with Lord Wellesley and Mr Canning on the subject. This was accordingly done ; but both declined the overture, on the ground, that the opinions of Lord Liverpool and his colleagues, remained unchanged on the Catholic question. On the failure of this plan, the Prince Regent empowered the Marquis Wellesley to attempt the formation of a Ministry on an extended basis ; and, accordingly, a proposal to that effect was transmitted to Lord Liverpool, as the organ of *one party*, and Lord Grey and *Lord Grenville*, as the heads of the Opposition.

Mr Canning was requested by Lord Wellesley to be the medium of communication with Lord Liverpool, and to state, that the principles on which the new Administration should be formed, were the same with those which had already been proposed by his Lordship when he retired from office. In a letter addressed to Mr Canning, dated May 23d, Lord Liverpool declined, on the part of his colleagues, the proposal of becoming members of an Administration to be formed by Lord Wellesley.

Another attempt, equally unsuccessful was made, to bring the leaders of the Whigs into office, and the arrangement was committed to Earl Moira. This negotiation, however, terminated, in consequence of the objection which they had to enter the Cabinet, while some officers of the Royal Household were permitted to remain. As soon as it was understood that no other obstacle existed to prevent Lord Grey and Lord Grenville from taking office, Lord Yarmouth, the principal person in the Regent's household, communicated to Mr Sheridan the intention of the Household to resign, with the view of having that intention conveyed to these noble Lords. "Not only," says Mr Moore, "did Sheridan endeavour to dissuade the noble Vice-Chamberlain from resigning, but with an unfairness of dealing which admits, I own, of no vindication, he withheld from the two leaders of opposition the intelligence thus meant to be conveyed to them; and when questioned by Mr Tierney, as to the rumoured intentions of the Household to resign, offered to bet five hundred guineas that there was no such step in contemplation." *It is difficult to conceive, what could have*

led Sheridan to act in such a manner ; but “ the main motive,” Mr Moore alleges, “ of the whole proceeding, is to be found in his devoted deference to what *he knew to be* the wishes and feelings of that Personage, who had become, now more than ever, the mainspring of all his movements.”

The failure of all these attempts, whether sincere or otherwise, to construct a Cabinet, including opposition members, led at length to the elevation of Lord Liverpool to the Premiership, and the formation of an Administration on exactly the same principles with that which had recently been dissolved. Mr Canning, of course, having declined to accept the proposals at first made to him, remained out of office. Catholic emancipation he always considered a question of paramount importance, and, therefore, he could not consent to join a ministry whose opinions on that point were different from his own. Anxious to press upon the attention of Parliament this important subject, he moved, on the 22d June, in a speech of overpowering eloquence, “ That the House will, early in the next Session, take into consideration the state of the laws respecting the Catholics.” Supported by Lord Castlereagh, who had accepted the office of Foreign Secretary, he carried the resolution by a very large majority. A similar resolution, proposed in the House of Lords by the Marquis Wellesley, was lost by a majority of one.

One of the most important subjects which came under the notice of Parliament this Session, was the inquiry into the effects of the Orders in Council, which was instituted by Mr Brougham. A motion *was made upon the subject*, which, how-

ever, was withdrawn, on the announcement of Lord Castlereagh, that Government had in view the adoption of conciliatory measures in regard to America. On the 23d of June, a proclamation appeared, declaring the suspension, from the 1st of August following, of the Orders in Council of January 1807 and April 1809, as far as regarded America, on condition that the prohibitory decrees of America should be suspended or rescinded. This concession, it was to be regretted, was too late to prevent a war with the United States.

Buonaparte, anticipating a rupture with Russia, made another effort this summer to conclude a negotiation with Great Britain; but after a brief correspondence, the matter was dropped. This abortive negotiation was noticed in the House of Lords, a few days before the prorogation of Parliament, which took place on the 30th of July.

The British campaign this year, in the Peninsula, was undoubtedly the most brilliant which had occurred during the war. The French Emperor had the mortification to perceive his authority in Spain every day diminishing; but, in the north of Europe, he received a still more severe check. Russia declared war against him in March, and at the same period, connected herself by treaty, with Great Britain and Turkey. Buonaparte immediately marched, at the head of a large army, for Russia; but the expedition was the most unfortunate which he could have undertaken. No sooner had he arrived in the enemy's territory, than he perceived the dangers to which, in such a climate, an approaching winter must expose his soldiers. *In vain did he make overtures for negotiation; they were refused.* Nothing remained for him

but retreat," and that too as quickly as possible. He fled, therefore, with the utmost precipitation, but not before the inhospitable climate had destroyed the greater part, both of his men and horses. Thus ended Buonaparte's Russian campaign, the most inglorious of all his exploits.

The intelligence of these events arrived in England, while the public mind was excited by the bustle of the elections, in consequence of the dissolution of Parliament, which had been announced on the 29th of September. The high opinion of the talents, integrity, and public conduct of Mr Canning, entertained throughout the country at this time, was clearly shown, by an invitation which he received from a number of the most respectable inhabitants of Liverpool, to become a candidate at the approaching election. This invitation was peculiarly flattering, as coming from a town of such high commercial importance; and the more so, as his opponents were Mr Brougham and Mr Creevy, men worthy of the utmost respect, from their talent, intelligence, and political consistency. The contest was conducted on both sides with the greatest keenness; and in his various speeches during the poll, Mr Canning candidly stated his opinions on some of the most important public questions. His open-hearted behaviour, indeed, on this occasion, in frankly avowing himself to be the friend of Catholic Emancipation, and the enemy of Parliamentary Reform, gained him the esteem of all parties. Towards the close of the poll, when his election was almost certain, he admitted with that generosity of heart which was characteristic of the man, that the conduct of

his antagonists had been, throughout, unexceptionable and gentleman-like.

At a public dinner given by his constituents after his election, Mr Canning delivered a splendid eulogium on Mr Pitt. The memory of that Statesman having been drunk, he rose and said, "Gentlemen, it is usual to return thanks for any honour conferred upon an absent friend. I understand that it will not be unacceptable to you, that I should presume, on this occasion, to extend that usage, and to express my acknowledgments for the honour done to the name of a departed friend, the illustrious Statesman whom you have just now so feelingly commemorated.

"The sentiments with which you regard the memory of that great and good man, are not the sentiments of Liverpool only, but of England; not of England only, but of Europe and of the world. Mr Pitt, gentlemen, was always true to those principles which the town of Liverpool has been distinguished for supporting; principles of loyalty and good government at home, and of dignified and magnanimous policy abroad. But Mr Pitt has not escaped the misrepresentation or misunderstanding, I will call it, to which these principles themselves have been exposed, and in the course of the recent contest, his name has been exposed.

"When posterity shall look back upon that great man, they will discriminate two different eras in his life. The one, when, on his succession to the government of the country, he found the finances of the State dilapidated, and its resources enervated, by an ill-conducted war. It was then that, *with a skilful and repairing hand*, he restored the *credit of the country*, recruited its exhausted

means, explored and expanded its capacities for exertion, and laid the foundation of that solid system, of which it is enough to say, that it has endured amid the storms which have assailed it since that time. From this statement, it may be confidently inferred, that war could not be more the passion of Mr Pitt, than, most assuredly, it could be his interest. Whether it were, nevertheless, the fault of Mr Pitt or not (the fault of his judgment, I mean), that we were engaged, precisely at the moment at which we were engaged, in the war which was continued, with little intermission, to the present time, may, perhaps, be matter of historical controversy; but that, by no human wisdom, and by no human forbearance, that war could have been deferred many years, or perhaps many months, the impartial historian will, I think, find it easy to demonstrate. But be that as it may; however we may have been brought into the war, what admits of no controversy at all is, that, from the reviving energy of his early administration, the country derived that strength by which it has been enabled to go through the contest. The second era of his political life began at the period when, from the centre of Europe, burst forth that volcanic eruption of desolating principles which threatened to overwhelm the civilized world. The firm resistance which Mr Pitt opposed to the dangers then menacing the country; the promptitude with which he took his stand on the ground of the constitution, and the courage with which he maintained it, the voice wherewith he raised the people; the mighty arm wherewith he saved the monarchy, *I need not recall to your recollection; for it is in*

faithful commemoration of these eminent services, that you have this day called upon his name.

“Gentlemen, into whatever hands the administration of the government may be committed, I hope that the Ministers will keep Mr Pitt’s example before their eyes ; that they will catch from that example, reverence for the constitution, and zeal for the glory of their country ; that they will learn from it to unite the interests of the people with those of the crown, in their domestic government ; and to uphold, by adequate exertions, and by a tone and vigour of counsels worthy of the high station to which Great Britain is entitled among the nations of the earth, the British name and influence abroad.”

In the new Parliament which met on the 30th of November, Mr Canning took his seat as member for Liverpool. The Prince Regent, in his first speech from the throne, noticed the triumphs in the Peninsula, and on the Continent of Europe, with the highest praise. He mentioned with regret a declaration of war by the United States, but pledged himself to direct his efforts to the restoration of peace.

After the Christmas recess, Ministers presented to Parliament an account of the circumstances which led to the rupture with America, and a declaration of the Prince Regent on the subject. In the discussion which then ensued, Mr Canning made a powerful speech, urging on Ministers the greatest activity and vigour in the prosecution of their hostile measures.

In the course of the Session, great interest was awakened in the public mind by an appeal which was made by the Princess of Wales to Parliament,

requesting an inquiry into her conduct. Though formerly acquitted of all the charges which had been brought against her, the Princess was still subjected to the harshest treatment. It is much to the honour of Mr Canning, that he always remained the steady friend of her Royal Highness. He had been a member of that commission, which several years before openly declared her innocence after a minute investigation ; and during the discussions which ensued this Session, his opinions were unaltered. Perceiving the persecution to which she was still exposed, he deeply sympathized with her, and earnestly urged her to quit the country, and reside on the Continent. With this advice her Royal Highness soon after complied, and thus for a time escaped the fury of that storm which was destined ere long to burst on her devoted head.

The friends of Catholic emancipation, gained another triumph in the House of Commons, by the success of a motion made by Mr Grattan, for referring the subject to a Committee of the whole House. On the introduction, however, of a bill for the removal of the Catholic disabilities, it was lost by the casting vote of the Speaker. In the course of the Session also, the Charter of the East India Company was renewed, with important changes, granting the Company the exclusive trade to China, but opening to the public the trade to all other parts of the East.

On the 11th of June, a treaty was announced to Parliament, between his Majesty and the King of Sweden ; and in a few days after, papers were laid upon the table, respecting a treaty between Sweden and Russia, in which Russia engaged to co-

operate in annexing Norway to Sweden, and both powers were to unite in inviting Denmark to accede amicably to the treaty which was to be guaranteed by Great Britain. Ministers experienced violent opposition on this subject, from the adherents of Earl Grey and Lord Grenville, who severely animadverted on the treaty. After having granted Ministers a vote of credit to a considerable amount, Parliament was prorogued on the 22d. July by a speech from the Regent.

The affairs of the Peninsula were so successful, that Lord Wellington, after defeating the French in several engagements, carried the war into France itself. In the north of Europe also, Buonaparte met with several reverses. A treaty of alliance was concluded, between Russia and Prussia, in the commencement of the year; and as the French Emperor had obtained a new army, he advanced to meet the combined forces of these two countries. They met near Leipsic, and an engagement took place, which, though general, was not decisive. Buonaparte, perceiving that the Continental alliances against him, were every day becoming stronger by the accession of some new power, made proposals for an armistice. Negotiations accordingly commenced at Prague, but were broken off by the declaration of war with France, on the part of the Austrian Emperor. The allies received another important addition to their strength, by the conclusion of a treaty between Austria and Bavaria, in which it was stipulated, that a large body of troops should be commissioned by Bavaria to act *in conjunction* with the allies. The battle of *Leipsic followed*, in which the French suffered a signal

defeat. In the conclusion of the year, the allies resolved to invade France.

The war with America was conducted this year on a very limited scale. Various unsuccessful attacks were made upon the British possessions in Canada, but the Americans had gained possession of York, the capital of Upper Canada, and were still carrying on the war with unabated ardour.

Administration felt the importance of the present crisis, and Parliament accordingly met so early as the 4th of November. All the propositions of Ministers, in regard to the foreign subsidies, passed, and the House adjourned on the 17th to the 1st of March 1814, in hopes that, before that time, a general peace would be concluded. During this long recess, Mr Canning paid a visit to his friends and constituents at Liverpool, by whom he was received with the greatest cordiality. At a public dinner, called on his account, he gave a clear and forcible statement of his views in regard to the existing condition of Europe. The oration which he delivered on that occasion, is one of uncommon brilliancy, full of lofty conception and noble patriotic sentiments.

The Allies entered Paris in the beginning of April, and shortly after the English Foreign Secretary of State set out for Paris to join them. A new treaty had been signed in the previous month at Chamont, and Buonaparte had proposed his ultimatum at Chatillon, which had been rejected, on account of the extravagance of its demands.

When Parliament met, on the 1st of March, another adjournment to the 21st was proposed, and carried by *Ministers*, in the full expectation *that the treaty of peace would be signed before*

reached the Congress of Vienna, which was then sitting, they denounced him "as without the pale of civil and social relations," and declared their determination to adhere to the treaty of Paris, of the 80th May, in all its parts. This was followed by a treaty between Great Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia, binding themselves to unite their forces for the expulsion of the Usurper. The important subject of the war was now discussed in both Houses; and in the course of the debate, some noble sallies of eloquence rendered the speeches peculiarly interesting. Mr Canning was at this time in private retirement at Lisbon; and though the magic of his voice was no longer heard within the walls of St Stephens, he was by no means an unconcerned spectator of what was passing in the world. He had expected that, towards the spring, the Prince Regent of Portugal would return to his European dominions; but finding that, in this expectation he was disappointed, he resigned his office as ambassador in the month of April. He remained, however, in Lisbon, some months longer as a private individual.

In the course of the summer, the battle of Waterloo, and the surrender of Buonaparte, put a period at once to the glories of Napoleon, and to those sanguinary contests which had shaken to their foundations every throne in Europe. The genius of Buonaparte was for ever extinguished; and he was henceforth doomed to linger out an inglorious existence in the remote island of St Helena.

In the speech of the Prince Regent on the prorogation of Parliament, which took place on the 11th of July, the restoration of the kingdom of

Naples to its ancient Sovereign, the reception of the King of France in his capital, and the renewal of peace with the United States of America, were mentioned with satisfaction. The treaty of peace concluded between France and the Allies was definitively settled at Paris on the 20th of November.

In the early part of 1816, Mr Canning having returned from Portugal, was prevailed upon to accept the office of President of the Board of Controul. In consequence of this appointment, he vacated his seat as member for Liverpool; and, after a violent opposition, both from Whigs and Radicals, he was again returned for that city. In the course of the election, the most shameful attempts were made to detract from the merits of Mr Canning; but his manly speech on that occasion, in vindication of his political sentiments and public conduct, completely satisfied his constituents, that the object of their choice would do them the greatest honour.

The first subject to which the attention of Parliament was directed, after its meeting in February, was the peace establishment of the army. The discussion was protracted through three adjournments; the strongest animadversions were made by Opposition on the magnitude of the existing establishments. Ministers defended the maintenance of the army in France on the ground of necessity alone; and it was alleged, that though the case was unusual, it was not likely to become a precedent.

Though Ministers, however, carried every point relative to the *army estimates*, they were outvoted

on the 18th of March, on the question of continuing the Property-tax, modified to 5 per cent.

In the summer of this year, both the agricultural and manufacturing interests loudly complained of poverty and want of employment. Riots happened in different districts of the country, and the utmost discontent and dissatisfaction appeared to prevail. In these circumstances, the meeting of Parliament was anticipated with anxiety.

At length the Session commenced on the 28th January 1817, when the Prince Regent, in his speech, noticed the late successful expedition to Algiers, under Lord Exmouth, and the termination of the military operations in India. In returning from the House of Peers, his Royal Highness was exposed to the insults and violent outrage of the mob; and it was therefore found necessary to propose a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act during the Session. This subject, which occupied the attention of Parliament for a short time, called forth from Mr Canning one of his most powerful speeches. Towards the close of the Session, as discontent and insurrection still prevailed in some districts, an act, for continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus to the 1st March 1818, was passed. Anxious to relieve as much as possible the general and severe pressure of the times, which had reduced the lower orders in the manufacturing districts to starvation, Parliament authorized the issue of Exchequer bills, to persons finding employment for the poor. The Opposition was much weakened this Session by the difference of opinion which took place on *questions connected with the suspension of the Habeas*

Corpus Act, between the friends of the late Mr Fox, and those of Lord Grenville.

Before the next meeting of Parliament, a decided improvement had taken place in the commerce of the country, and tranquillity was consequently restored in the disturbed districts. The Session commenced on the 29th January 1818. Ministers proposed and carried, not without great difficulty, an Indemnity Bill, to protect all parties who had apprehended or prosecuted persons suspected of high treason under the last suspension Act. A grant of 400,000*l.* was passed as a compensation to Spain for the losses occasioned by the abolition of the Slave Trade ; and grants of 6000*l.* each to several of the Royal Dukes, in consequence of their marriages. The business of the Session was closed on the 10th of June, by a speech of the Prince Regent, announcing the dissolution of Parliament.

In the new elections, Mr Canning again presented himself, by invitation, as candidate for Liverpool. Earl Sefton was brought forward in opposition to him, and a remarkably keen contest ensued. Finding that his voters were every day decreasing, the Earl had recourse to the novel expedient of bringing forward a nominal candidate. This led to the adoption of the same plan by the friends of Mr Canning ; and to such an extent was this manœuvre carried on both sides, that, on the fourth day of the poll, the nominal candidates amounted to eighteen, which, with the three real candidates, made in all *twenty-one*. After this harassing and protracted contest, Mr Canning had the high satisfaction of being appointed the *third time member for Liverpool*. At the public din-

ner after the election, he addressed his constituents in a long speech, in vindication of the part which he had hitherto acted in public affairs, and adduced some ingenious arguments against Parliamentary Reform. The speech is in the first style of eloquence; but, as usual, he admits the evil, which he declares it is unnecessary to remedy. In consequence of this third triumph in Liverpool, the fame of Mr Canning every day increased, and his opinions were listened to with great deference, as the representative of the second commercial city in the empire.

On the 4th of November, the Congress assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle, consisting of plenipotentiaries from the Courts of Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, determined on the discontinuance of the military occupation of France. In consequence of the Queen's death, which happened on the 17th of this month, it became necessary to summon the new Parliament, that the requisite arrangements might be made in regard to the Royal Family. Parliament accordingly met for the despatch of business on the 14th of January 1819. The circumstances in which the late elections had taken place, tended greatly to augment the strength of opposition, as was shown in the success of the motion made by Sir James Mackintosh, for the revision of the criminal code. Various petitions were laid upon the table of the House, from those individuals who had suffered by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; and the account of the punishments to which they had in several instances been subjected, excited the indignation of several members. Mr Canning, who was well acquainted *with the fictitious nature of some of these tales of*

sed as insulting to the House of Commons. conclusion of the pamphlet runs in these
11—"If you even accuse me of treason, throw
me to prison,—make your jailors load me with
1, and then jest at my sufferings,—I will put
you to death." Mr Canning replied to this rude
violent attack in a letter to the unknown au-
and evidently with an indignation which he
not restrain, says, that he had addressed the
to him, for the purpose of telling him that
he a liar and slanderer, and wanted courage
to be an assassin.

ministers, conscious of their strength, came
on this Session with a proposal to raise
£1,000,000 of new taxes; opposition feebly strug-
gled against the motion: it was carried by a large
majority. The Catholic claims were also brought
up by Mr Grattan, in a very able speech, but
the motion was of course lost.

the course of the Session and after its close

60,000 persons had assembled, the Magistrates called out the Yeomanry cavalry to disperse the mob. A dreadful scene ensued, and many were either murdered or trampled under foot. It must not be concealed, that the severity of the Five Acts, passed in the subsequent Session, and which were the consequence of those seditious meetings held during the year, is chargeable on Mr Canning, who was one of their firmest and ablest supporters. The irritation excited among the lower orders by the Manchester massacre, and by the pressure of the times, led to such a state of disorder, that it was necessary to convene Parliament earlier than usual. The Session, accordingly, commenced on the 23d of November. After passing several bills for the prevention of disturbances, and transacting urgent business, they adjourned.

On the 29th January 1820, George III. was succeeded by his son George IV. The new Sovereign had exercised the kingly power for eight years, in consequence of his Royal father's mental indisposition, and was accustomed to direct the measures of Administration. It was not expected, therefore, that the usual changes consequent on the accession of a new monarch would occur; and, accordingly, on the resignation of the Ministers, the day after the King's demise, they were re-installed in office. Parliament met for taking the oath of allegiance to the new Sovereign, and was adjourned till the 17th of February, being the day after the funeral of his late Majesty. In consequence of the King's death, Parliament was of course dissolved. By the solicitation of his friends, *Mr Canning* was again put in nomination for *Liverpool*. His opponents, on this occasion, were

Dr Crompton and Mr Leyland ; and the friends of both, anxious to defeat Mr Canning, used every effort to protract the election. The event, however, proved the fruitlessness of their efforts, for he was a fourth time elected as the representative of the town of Liverpool. In the speeches which he delivered, both before and after his election, he gave a luminous defence of his political opinions and his public conduct. Parliamentary Reform was of course keenly reprobated, while the Five Acts against sedition, and all the proceedings of Government, in regard to the late disturbances, were ably defended.

The triumph of his success at Liverpool was, however, in the course of a few days, forgot, amid the anguish of mind which he felt on the death of his eldest son, George Charles Canning, in his nineteenth year. By the early indications of talent which he exhibited, his father had been led to form the highest expectations of his future eminence ; and the beautiful lines inscribed on his tomb, display the grief of the paternal heart, softened and subdued by the consolations of religion.

The new Parliament met on the 21st of April for the despatch of business, when the alleviation of the distresses of the mercantile interests and improvements in the internal polity of the country, formed the principal topics of discussion during the session.

In the spring of this year, the most intense interest was awakened in the public mind, by the arrival of the Queen of England from the Continent. It is painful to advert, even in the slightest degree, to *circumstances* which stamp with everlasting disgrace, all who either sanctioned or took

a part in them. Mr Canning, who had been frequently the guest of her Majesty previous to her departure from England, had formed the highest opinion both of her talents and amiable dispositions. He boldly declared the value which he put upon her friendship, when he styled her "the life, the grace, and ornament of society." It was by his advice that she retired to the Continent; and on her return, as his opinion was still unchanged, he was in considerable perplexity as to the course he should pursue. As soon as the negotiations commenced between Ministers and the Queen, Mr Canning took an interest in the proceedings, hoping that an amicable arrangement might be effected between the parties. With this view, Mr Wilberforce proposed and carried in the House of Commons, resolutions in the form of an address to her Majesty, conveying the anxious prayer of the House, that her Majesty would accede to the terms proposed by Ministers.

The reply of her Majesty to this address, put an end to all hope of an amicable arrangement; and Mr Canning, differing as he did with his colleagues, determined to retire from the Cabinet. On the very day, indeed, in which her Majesty's answer was read in the House of Commons, he requested an audience of the King, and having obtained it next day, he tendered his resignation. His Majesty, however, commanded Mr Canning to remain in office, abstaining as much as he might think fit, from any share in the proceedings respecting the Queen, and gave him full authority to plead his Majesty's express command for so continuing in office. From that moment Mr Canning *abstained from all interference on the subject of*

the Queen's affairs; and, therefore, the odium which attached to those Ministers who prepared the bill of pains and penalties cannot rest on him. During the whole progress of that bill he was absent on the Continent, and indeed he remained there till it was withdrawn. On his return to London, the difficulties of his situation still remained. He absented himself both from the discussions in Parliament, and in the Cabinet; but this appeared to him inconsistent with his duties as holding an official station. After a due consideration of the matter in all its bearings, he came to the resolution of retiring from office; which he accordingly did, by the permission of the Sovereign.

Immediately after the resignation of his office as President of the Board of Controul, which he had held nearly five years, Mr Canning received a letter from the Directors of the East India Company, expressive of the high value which they put upon his services. This was followed a few months after, by a still more flattering communication from a special meeting of the East India proprietors. The proudest satisfaction which a public functionary can enjoy, is to know that his services have been appreciated by those to whose benefit they are directed; and on this occasion, Mr Canning felt that, in the testimony of the above mentioned letters, he was highly honoured.

As Parliament had been in the last Session almost solely occupied in proceedings relative to the Queen, its attention in the Session of 1821, was directed to several important topics connected both with foreign and domestic policy. On an early day after their meeting, a Committee on Foreign Trade was moved and carried in both Houses.

The revolution which had recently occurred in Naples, and the measures of the Holy Alliance, were also brought before Parliament, on which occasion it was distinctly stated by Ministers, that Britain was not a party to that alliance. The measure which had met with the constant support of Mr Canning through the whole of his political career, viz. the Catholic claims, was again proposed this year by Mr Plunkett. The bill passed triumphantly through the Commons, but was rejected in the House of Lords.

Parliament was prorogued on the 11th July, and on the 19th of the same month, the splendid ceremony took place, of the coronation of his Majesty George IV. In a few weeks after, his Majesty paid a visit to Ireland, where his presence had a considerable influence in subduing the popular irritation which threatened to involve that unhappy country in all the horrors of another insurrection. In the absence of the King from London, death put a period to the persecution of the Queen of England.

Parliament was opened by the King in person on the 5th February 1822. The agricultural distress and the state of Ireland were discussed with the most intense interest in both Houses; but the subject which chiefly called forth the energy and eloquence of Mr Canning, was his own bill for admitting Catholic Peers into Parliament, and his speech on that occasion was a masterly display of ac reasoning.

“ It has been said, that we are not to open door to an evil, which, if once admitted, may *be easily removed*. A lion is in the lobby: *if admitted, we may not be able to get him out.*

are few, but the Commoners would overturn Protestant faith. They are in such masses at war, ready to enter, that we dare not open war, for fear of this many-headed Catholic serpent. The Peers cannot be admitted to possession of their right, to sit in the Peers' house, in fact was only suspended; for the forms adhered to, while the substance was suspended—out of fear of ruin to the constitution. Is it possible to conceive this exclusion necessary? Are the Howards and the Talbots so degraded from the character of their ancestors, that the constitution would not be safe if they were admitted to seats? To make the supposition of dangerous, it is necessary, first, that the Catholics should be returned in great numbers; secondly, that they should combine; and, thirdly, that they should manage with such dexterity as to bring the government or the monarch to join in combination. Some persons have such an antipathy to cats, that they are sensible of the danger of one into a room, before they have seen it; it is perched. Now, I never felt annoyed in sitting myself seated next a dissenter. I really feel no apprehension of that sensitive and accountable kind. I will grant, for the argument—that one hundred Catholic members should be returned, partly from Ireland and partly from England—I will grant that they combine—I will grant that they would combine for overturning the ecclesiastical establishment—but granting all this, how are they to go about it? It must be, first, by force of reasoning; second, by force of numbers; or, third, by force alone. Is it, then, gravely stated, that the eloquence of the opponents

hundred members would succeed in persuading gentlemen attached to the Protestant establishment to join them in destroying it, in order to make way for the magnificent edifice of mitred Popery? Can any one believe that the members who might, in consequence of this bill, be admitted to seats in Parliament, would move such a project? Or can any one suppose for a moment, that the slightest motion that had such an end in view, would not be immediately resisted in Parliament as futile and impracticable?"

The motion passed the House of Commons by a majority of five, but was lost in the House of Lords, by a majority of forty-two.

After the prorogation of Parliament, his Majesty paid a visit to Scotland, where he was cordially greeted with the warmest expressions of loyalty and attachment. But almost immediately after his arrival in that part of his dominions, he received the painful intelligence of the death of the Marquis of Londonderry, who put a period to his own existence on the 12th of August. Mr Canning, in the meantime, from the high respect which the East India Company entertained for his able performance of his functions, while President of the Board of Controul, was invested with the office of Governor-General of India. This office appeared to open up the path both to fortune and to fame; and, as there seemed but little probability, in the existing state of the Cabinet, that he would ever again take office in conjunction with men who were by no means favourable to his liberal opinions, he accepted the appointment. That *he was unwilling to bid adieu to his country, it were injustice to Mr Canning to deny.* But urg-

ed by higher considerations, he resolved to sacrifice his inclinations. Previous, however, to his embarkation for India, he paid a farewell visit to Liverpool. The affecting circumstances in which Mr Canning now appeared among his constituents, awakened the liveliest interest in the town. Addresses were presented to him by all the commercial bodies, expressive of the sense they entertained of his services as their representative in Parliament. Several public dinners were given in honour of his visit ; and, before leaving the town, he was presented with a piece of plate, bearing a suitable inscription.

In one of his speeches delivered at the Canning Club, during this visit, the following beautiful passage occurs. “ What should we think of that philosopher, who, in writing at the present day a treatise upon naval architecture and the theory of navigation, should omit wholly from his calculation that new and mighty power—new at least in the application of its might,—which walks the water like a giant, rejoicing in his course ;—stemming alike the tempest and the tide ;—accelerating intercourse, shortening distances ;—creating as it were unexpected neighbourhoods, and new combinations of social and commercial relation ;—and giving to the fickleness of winds and the faithlessness of waves, the certainty and steadiness of a highway upon the land ? Such a writer, though he might describe a ship correctly ; though he might show from what quarters the winds of heaven blow, would be surely an incurious and idle spectator of the progress of nautical science, who did not see in *the power of steam*, a corrective of all

former calculations. So, in political science, he who, speculating on the British Constitution, should content himself with marking the distribution of acknowledged technical powers, between the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and the Crown, and assigning to each their separate provinces—to the Lords their legislative authority,—to the Crown its veto (how often used?)—to the House of Commons, its power of stopping supplies, (how often in fact necessary to be resorted to?)—and should think that he should thus describe the British Constitution as it acts, and as it is influenced in action ; but should omit from his enumeration that mighty power of public opinion, embodied in a free press, which prevades and checks, and, perhaps, in the last resort, nearly governs the whole ; such a man would surely give but an imperfect view of the government of England, as it is now modified, and would greatly underrate the counteracting influence against which that of the executive power has to contend.”

When Mr Canning was about to embark for his new destination, he was again called to take a share in the public councils, in consequence of the death of the Marquis of Londonderry. In accepting the Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs, the duties of which, he had formerly discharged with so much honour to himself and benefit to his country, Mr Canning felt that he was taking part in an Administration where, by the enlightened assistance of his early friend Lord Liverpool, and no longer fettered by the illiberal policy of the Marquis of Londonderry, he would follow out his own *principles* and enlarged views of national policy. *The opinions* of his colleagues, Mr Robinson, Mr

Huskisson, and others, were almost in perfect harmony on all points, especially in regard to internal affairs, with those which he had once listened to with enthusiasm, from the lips of Fox and Sheridan and Burke. Though long connected apparently with men whose political sentiments were cast in a different mould, he had been still more attached to the *men* than their *measures*; and when at length he saw these measures carried to their utmost extent by the reckless and execrated Castlereagh, his mind revolted from principles which, in their milder form, he persuaded himself to embrace. It was at that time that the ruinous effects of these principles appeared to the mind of Canning in their true light; and from the death of the most unpopular minister who has ever held a seat in the British Cabinet, may be dated the commencement of that system of enlightened policy which has won the confidence of all classes in the community. Mr Canning had long ago perceived and declared the incapacity of the late Foreign Secretary; so much indeed did he detest his measures, that he never cultivated a close intimacy with him. Castlereagh and Canning never clung to each other as kindred spirits; there always existed a secret coldness, which prevented them from cordially uniting in any public scheme.

The principles on which Mr Canning and his colleagues intended henceforth to conduct the public affairs, were developed in the course of the next Session of Parliament, which met in February 1823. The agricultural interest was still in a state of depression, but there was an evident improvement in the *manufactories*, and in the *foreign commerce of the country*. Mr Canning, in his

speech on the Silk Trade, stated the enlightened opinions of Ministers in regard to domestic policy, in a style of noble and manly eloquence.

“ We must deal,” he said, “ with the affairs of men on abstract principles, modified, of course, according to times and circumstances. Is not the doctrine and spirit of those who persecute my right honourable friend (Mr Huskisson), the same which, in former times, stirred up persecution against the best benefactors of mankind? Is it not the same doctrine and spirit which embittered the life of Turgot? Is it not a doctrine and spirit such as these which consigned Galileo to the dungeons of the Inquisition? Is it not a doctrine and spirit such as these, which have at all times been at work to roll back the tide of civilization—a doctrine and spirit actuating little minds, who, incapable of reaching the heights from which alone extended views of human nature can be taken, console and revenge themselves by calumniating and misrepresenting those who have toiled to those heights for the advantage of mankind? Sir, I have not to learn that there is a faction in the country—I mean not a political faction—I should perhaps rather have said a sect, small in number, and powerless in might, who think that all advances towards improvement are retrogradations towards Jacobinism. These persons seem to imagine, that under no possible circumstances can an honest man endeavour to keep his country upon a line with the progress of political knowledge, and to adapt its course to the varying circumstances of the world. Such an attempt is branded as an *indication of mischievous intentions*, as evidence of *a design to sap the foundations of the greatness of*

ry and unsubstantial theories; but not re-
s, nevertheless, the application of sound and
some knowledge to practical affairs; and
ig, with sobriety and caution, into the service
country, every generous and liberal prin-
whose excess indeed may be dangerous, but
foundation is in truth."

the principal topic which engaged the at-
of Parliament this Session, was the con-
f France and the Allies in regard to Spain.
ach army had entered the Peninsula, and,
ry to the law of nations, made an unjust at-
pon Spain. This called forth a decided re-
ance on the part of the British Govern-
and the Duke of Wellington was sent to
with instructions to contradict the statement
had been published by the French minister,
steaubriand, that the invasion of Spain was
med by Great Britain.

length on the 14th April. Mr. Canning said

by disfranchising the smaller freeholders in Ireland. This bill, proposed by Sir F. Burdett, was carried in the House of Commons, but rejected in the House of Lords. It was generally supposed, that the declaration of the Duke of York, that he was then, and would ever remain hostile to the measure, was the only circumstance which prevented it from obtaining a majority in its favour.

Towards the close of the year, the spirit of speculation had been carried to such an extent, that the mercantile interests were in a state of unexampled embarrassment, credit was destroyed, and thousands were involved in bankruptcy. The attention of the Cabinet was directed to the subject, and it was at last resolved, that one and two pounds Bank of England notes should be issued for the relief of the country, and an extraordinary coinage of sovereigns was ordered. By the operation of these measures, the temporary depression was in some degree relieved, and confidence restored before the next meeting of Parliament in February 1826.

In the discussions which ensued this Session on the question of the currency, Mr Canning took an active part. The measures of Ministers in regard to it, were included in two bills; the one designated the Small Note Bill; the other rendering unlimited the number of partners who might legally unite as partners, and form a bank.

The question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade was brought before the House in March, when Mr Canning expressed himself in favour of a gradual, not a sudden abolition of that shameful traffic. In his former speeches on this subject, *there was an uncompromising dignity which im-*

ally demanded a speedy abolition ; now, however, he appeared alarmed by the opposition of colonists, and he was contented to wait till an opportunity occurred, when the measure might be effected without danger.

The most important topic of consideration with Ministers, at this period, was the state of the Corn Laws. The recent distresses of the country, rendered it absolutely necessary that some practical measure should be taken to relieve the people. With this view, it was resolved to liberate the bonded corn, amounting to 270,000 quarters of wheat, at the rate of 10s. per quarter. Still farther, to obviate the distressing consequence which might result from a bad harvest, Ministers obtained from Parliament a discretionary power to admit, if necessary, foreign corn to the amount of 500,000 quarters on the payment of a certain duty. Throughout the discussion, it was uniformly admitted on all sides, that a change in the existing Corn Laws would be beneficial to the country. During the session, Ministers were compelled, from the failure of the crop of oats, to exercise the power which was vested in them of admitting foreign corn.

In autumn, Mr Canning paid a visit to Paris, where he was received with the greatest kindness, though a plebeian, honoured with an invitation to the table of the King. What was the object of this visit to the Continent it is difficult to say ; but, in all probability, it had a reference to the treaty with France and Russia, which has since been concluded in behalf of the Greeks.

Writs, in the meantime, were issued for the dissolution of a new Parliament, which met for the first time on the 14th November. In

the debate on the Address, Mr Canning mentioned, that Ministers were prepared to bring forward a measure in regard to the Corn Laws, but that they considered it as due both to the Parliament and the people, to delay the proposition till after the Christmas holidays. The attention of both Houses was occupied for some time, after their meeting, with the discussion of the propriety of that step, to which Ministers had recourse for the relief of the people. But the last and most important subject brought before the House previous to adjournment, was the assistance afforded by Government to Portugal. Ferdinand, King of Spain, alarmed at the near approach of a representative form of government, was constantly making aggressions upon the Portuguese dominions, or at least countenancing the rebels who were anxious to excite a counter-revolution. After having, in vain, remonstrated with Ferdinand on such conduct, the British Government, at length, resolved to assist Portugal, their ancient ally, against the aggressions of the Spanish Monarch.

On the 11th December, Mr Canning brought down a message to the House of Commons from his Majesty, expressing his firm determination to prevent any hostile attack on Portugal. In bringing forward his motion for a corresponding Address in answer to his Majesty's message, the Foreign Secretary delivered the most eloquent speech that ever came from his lips. The manliness and noble spirit which characterized the oration, was worthy of the cause in which he spoke, and operated like an electric shock on the House and the country. All felt the wisdom and propriety of the measures which Ministers had resolved to

, and every bosom responded to the generous, patriotic, and high-minded sentiment conveyed in the celebrated speech of Mr Canning. Did his reputation as an orator, depend on this single specimen of parliamentary eloquence, he would be entitled to rank among the most brilliant speakers, either ancient or of modern times. So prompt and decided had been the resolution of Ministers, that

Mr Canning was calling upon the House of Commons to sanction the measure, the troops were on their march for Portugal.

In making of the Constitution, the orator thus addressed himself: "As an English Minister, all I have to say is, may God prosper the attempt by Portugal to obtain constitutional liberty, may that nation be as fit to receive and cherish it as, on other occasions, she is capable of discharging her duties among the nations of Europe!"

"I read war," he says, in an after part of the speech, "not from a distrust of our powers and of our resources to meet it, but because I am convinced

of the tremendous power which this country possesses, of pushing any war in which she may now be engaged, to consequences, at the bare contemplation of which I shudder. I fear that the war in Europe, if it should spread beyond the limits of Portugal and Spain, will be a war of most tremendous nature, because it will be a contest of conflicting opinions; and I know, that if the interests and honour of this country should require us to enter into it, although we might enter it, I trust, we shall always do, with a firm determination to mitigate rather than exasperate,—to converse with arms, and *not* with opinions; yet I know, that *this country* could not avoid seeing ranked

under her banners all the restless and all the dissatisfied, whether with or without cause, of every nation with which she might be placed at variance. I say, Sir, the consciousness of this fact,—the knowledge that there is in the hands of this country such a tremendous power, induces me to feel as I do feel. But it is one thing ‘to have a giant’s strength,’ and another thing to ‘use it like a giant.’ The consciousness that we have this power, keeps us safe. Our business is not to seek out opportunity for displaying it, but to keep it so that it may be hereafter shown that we knew its proper use, and to shrink from converting the umpire into the oppressor. Sir, the consequence of the letting loose those passions which are all chained up, may be such as would lead to a scene of desolation, such as no one can for a moment contemplate without horror, and such as I could never lie easy upon my couch, if I were conscious of having by one hour precipitated.”

At the funeral of the Duke of York, which took place on the 20th January 1827, Mr Canning, who attended along with the other Cabinet Ministers, caught a severe cold. For a few days, though indisposed, he continued to attend to public business, but at length his illness increased to such an extent, that he was confined to his room. When Parliament met, pursuant to adjournment, on the 8th of February, Mr Canning was absent, and indeed in a dangerous state. In a short time, however, his illness began to abate, and he rapidly recovered.

During Mr Canning’s indisposition, an event of a very distressing nature occurred. On the 17th

February, Lord Liverpool was seized with an apoplectic attack; which, though it did not terminate his life, put a period to his political existence. By this melancholy event, the Ministry was dissolved.

As soon as Mr Canning had so far recovered as to appear again in Parliament, he brought forward the propositions of Ministers in regard to the Corn Laws, which had been postponed on account of his indisposition; and, in a speech of considerable power, enlarged upon the modifications intended to be introduced.

On the 6th of March, Mr Canning delivered an eloquent address on the Catholic question; and, so much did he exert himself on that occasion, that it was followed by a relapse of his disease, which again prevented for a time his attendance in Parliament. In consequence of Lord Liverpool's severe illness, it became necessary to fill up the office which had thus become vacant. His Majesty immediately raised Mr Canning to the Premiership, and empowered him to construct a Cabinet. The announcement of this in the House of Commons gave almost universal satisfaction. A few members, indeed, either through personal hostility to the new Premier, or a disapprobation of his liberal measures, felt dissatisfied with the choice which his Majesty had made; but throughout the country, the intelligence of Mr Canning's elevation to the Premiership was hailed with the utmost satisfaction. Seven of his colleagues, unwilling to serve under him, resigned. The reason alleged for this extraordinary conduct, was the difference which existed between them and Mr Canning, in regard to the Catholic question. Finding that

he was forsaken by his former colleagues, the new Premier, after a somewhat protracted negotiation, formed an Administration composed of the liberal portion of the old Ministry, and several Opposition members. This coalition was visited with the resentment of the Ex-ministers and their adherents, during the remaining part of the Session.

The harassing nature of his present circumstances, and the multiplied cares and anxieties to which he was now exposed, preyed upon his mind. Disease now began to make rapid inroads upon his constitution, and a sudden attack of inflammation of the kidneys, at length terminated his existence on the 12th of August. He died in his 57th year, at Chiswick, the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, and in the same room where Mr. Fox breathed his last. He was interred on the 16th of the same month in Westminster Abbey.

At his death Mr Canning had attained the highest glory at which a patriot statesman can aspire, the confidence of the King and the esteem and approbation of the people. All eyes were turned towards the man on whom depended, not the fate of Britain alone, but of Europe. His political career at first might be rather equivocal, but in the end it was decidedly liberal. The progress of rational liberty was dear to his heart, and in his eyes, latterly, the approbation of the people was the only test of good government. Such sentiments pointed him out as far superior to the prejudices and illiberal opinions of some of his associates; and the whole of his political character and conduct since he has an opportunity of displaying it, entitles him to be considered as one of the most enlightened statesmen that ever directed the councils of the British Cabinet.

EUROPE IN 1827.

I.

GREAT BRITAIN.



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BRITAIN has long stood pre-eminent among the European nations, by the transcendent glory of her arms, the wisdom of her political councils, and the intellectual character of her people. Of late, however, her claims to superiority have become still more evident, from the interesting aspect which her internal policy has assumed. No longer fettered by her connexion with Continental Courts and Cabinets, Britain has for some years past presented in the eyes of Europe and the world, the brilliant spectacle of a government and people advancing with unexampled rapidity and majesty in a career of progressive improvement. Listening respectfully to the voice of enlightened public opinion, the Government, by pursuing a liberal system of policy, completely established itself in the confidence and esteem of the country; and though, by the depression of trade since 1825, the population have suffered severe distress, this commercial crisis has only increased their attachment to government, by affording an opportunity of display-

ing the benevolence of the Sovereign and of his Ministers.

In 1826, the Administration became still more popular, by the anxiety which they evinced to relieve the distresses of the labouring classes by the repeal of several oppressive taxes. Nothing occurred in the course of the year to interest the public mind, unless we consider as such the order issued by the King to summon a new Parliament. The bustle and happy festivity connected with Elections now prevailed throughout the country, and tended in some degree to draw off the attention of the people from their sufferings, which had so long discouraged and depressed them. Towards the end of the year the Session of Parliament commenced, but nothing of importance in regard to internal policy was discussed before the Christmas recess.

In the beginning of 1827, the country was considerably affected by the death of the Heir-presumptive to the Throne, his Royal Highness the Duke of York. The decided improvements which the noble Duke had introduced into the organization and discipline of the army; the heroism and intrepidity of his conduct in the Continental Wars; above all, the affability and condescension of his private character, as they attracted, while he lived, the love of all ranks in the community, rendered his death a subject of general lamentation throughout the empire. If, at one time, the lustre of his name was tarnished by the public exposure of private errors; these had all been forgot amid those innumerable acts of kindness and attention to the interests of the meanest soldier in *the army*, which, in the exercise of his duties as

Commander-in-chief, had gained him the proud appellation of the *soldier's friend*.

His Royal Highness was succeeded in the government of the army, by the Duke of Wellington, whose long experience in military affairs seemed to entitle him, above every other man in the country, to fill this high and important station. The qualities of his mind were not, it is true, like those of his predecessor, calculated to win the affection of the soldiers, but, what is of more importance to a public functionary, they were adapted to call forth respect. There was one circumstance, however, connected with this appointment, which was justly considered as likely to affect his Grace's impartiality in the discharge of his important functions,—his retaining a seat in the Cabinet, after his appointment over the army. It is by no means insinuated that his Grace has, in any case, been actuated in the exercise of his patronage by a motive so mean and contemptible as party-feeling; still the remark holds true, that, in filling such a situation as that of Commander-in-chief, it is of the utmost importance to be free from all temptation to be swayed by political influence.

In consequence of the lamented death of the Duke of York, William, Duke of Clarence, now became heir-presumptive to the Crown. His Majesty, anxious that his Royal brother should obtain a provision suitable to his new situation, sent down a message to the Commons to that effect, immediately after the House had resumed its sittings. In accordance with his Majesty's request, the sum of 12,000*l.* additional to the income of his Royal Highness was granted. This motion,

however, met with considerable opposition in both Houses, on the ground that there had been no precedent for such a grant in the case of the Duke of York ; and besides, that, in the depressed state of the country, the utmost economy in the public expenditure was necessary.

The suffering condition of the labouring classes in England and Scotland, but still more in Ireland, forced upon the attention of Parliament, at an early period of the Session, the important subject of Emigration. The vast increase of the population of Ireland, beyond the means of subsistence, led Government some years ago to think of a remedy for so serious an evil. In the British possessions, in Canada, the large tracts of uncultivated land, and the great scarcity of labourers, seemed to hold out some promise of relief to the surplus population of this country. It was, therefore, determined in 1823 to institute an experiment, with the view of ascertaining the probable expense of sending out emigrants to that colony. The individuals selected for this purpose were destitute Irish labourers, to the number of 568 ; and so well did the experiment succeed, that, with the expense of only 22*l.* for each individual, these labourers were soon transferred from a state of absolute poverty and wretchedness to the status and comfort of independent landholders. In 1825, another emigration took place of 2024 persons from Ireland to Canada, at the charge of Government ; and, certainly, this must be considered as a most encouraging example of the mode in which Britain may rid itself of its surplus population, when it *is considered that the produce of their labour for the first year was valued at nearly one-fourth of*

the whole expense of their settlement. But however valuable this mode of relief may be in itself in regard to Ireland, it can never be considered in any other view than as a merely temporary and imperfect remedy, for a vast and fearfully increasing evil. So long as ignorance, idleness and immorality prevail in that unhappy country, and so long as her political grievances are unredressed, and her religious wrongs unheard, all the plans which legislators may devise for the alleviation of her woes, will be only ineffective and nugatory. As a temporary measure, however, emigration may prove both expedient and necessary, especially at a season so distressing, as that in which the lower classes of the three kingdoms, were reduced to a most deplorable state of misery and want. Such was in reality the condition of the country, when the Emigration Committee, which had been appointed in 1826, was renewed in the following year.

The actual amount of good, capable of being effected at an expense comparatively inconsiderable, appears to be so great, that the propriety of the plan can scarcely be doubted, even although the emigrants were established in Canada at the charge of Government, without the slightest expectation of being repaid. But from the evidence of a former Committee, it appears to be probable, that the emigrants, by moderate industry, might repay the money expended on their settlement by partial instalments in the course of seven years. In this case, all objection to the scheme founded on its expense is fully obviated, as there can be very little doubt that the outlay would in a short time be completely refunded.

The wages of labour in this country have been

for some years utterly inadequate to the support of the labouring classes, and of late they have been still farther reduced, by the overflow of redundant population of Ireland into England and Scotland. The evils attendant on so great an influx of Irish labourers into the adjacent countries are incalculable. Not only do they diminish the price of labour, and thus destroy the comfort of the peasantry, but, by the baleful influence of example, they bid fair to eradicate from the country that sobriety and decency, which have so long characterized the lower orders both of England and Scotland. On these grounds, the question of emigration may be considered as of the highest importance, not only in establishing the comfort and independence of emigrants, but in improving the condition of the poor throughout the empire.

At an early period of the Session of Parliament Mr Peel brought before the House of Commons his plan for consolidating and amending the English Criminal Law. The indefatigable perseverance, with which the Home Secretary proceeded, in simplifying and improving our common law regulations, as well as our civil and criminal code, entitle him to the gratitude and esteem of his country. So voluminous, intricate, and unintelligible, had the whole system of British Legislation become, that the ends of statutory enactments were completely defeated; and difficult, therefore, must have been the task of reforming abuses, so many and so various;—abuses, besides, not only connected with the laws themselves, but with the administration of them. The Court of Justice had become corrupt; the advantages of the Jury system were in a great measure neg-

ized; nay, the ends of justice were in many cases defeated by the litigants themselves. Such was the state of matters, when Mr Peel commenced his labours in the cause of legal reform; and now that he has given rise to so many improvements in the administration of justice in the civil courts, his exertions must be considered as highly praiseworthy, though it cannot be denied, that he only followed in the steps of Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh.

In the Session of 1827, the attention of Mr Peel was directed to the Criminal law, particularly the statutes in regard to larceny, burglary, and robbery. In many instances loose and contradictory, these laws were rendered more definite, intelligible, and consistent. In the law, as it stood before Mr Peel introduced his improvements, a distinction was made between grand and petty larceny, which was judged unnecessary, and therefore abolished. If a criminal stole to the value of one shilling, he was indicted for petty larceny; if more than that sum, for grand larceny, and punished accordingly. Great inconvenience, besides, arose, from this law, on the ground that these two species of larceny must be tried in different courts. If a man, for example, was guilty of stealing two shillings, which came within the range of grand larceny, he must be sent for trial to the county town, with whatever expense and delay such a step might be attended. Another alteration introduced was to raise the sum (at that time forty shillings), the stealing of the value of which constituted the distinction between capital burglary, and that species of robbery not punished with death. *Several other improvements were proposed by Mr Peel to the House, all of which*

met the approbation of a large majority of the members present.

As connected with the reform introduced into the law of England, an attempt was made to bring before the House a bill for the purification of a Court of Law, which has hitherto equally defied inquiry and reform—the Court of Chancery. On what grounds the bill was afterwards withdrawn, does not appear; but certain it is, that all the bright prospects which the very mention of reform in Chancery had excited, were speedily obscured. In 1826, a commission had been appointed to investigate the practice of that court, in the view of saving the time and expense of suitors. The bill brought in by the Master of the Rolls, was founded on the propositions of that Commission, with some slight modifications. As it had been long a subject of serious complaint, that suits carried on in the Court of Chancery were interminable, the Commission recommended, that the decision of the Master in Chancery should be final in cases of exception. This measure, if adopted, would have been highly injudicious, for it would have been committing to the decision of one Judge, without the power of appeal, questions of the greatest importance, and often involving the fortunes of individuals. This suggestion, therefore, was excluded from the bill, and a clause substituted which permitted one appeal; and the appellant might choose the tribunal, but the decision of such tribunal, when chosen, must be final. This plan, had it been followed up, would have, in a great measure, prevented that arrear of unheard cases, *which for many years past has been on the increase.* In the bill now under review, it was fur-

ther proposed, that the exorbitant fees, which the Master in Chancery had been accustomed to demand under the name of copy money, should be completely abolished. This would have been no doubt a considerable relief to individuals carrying on suits in Chancery. The bill, it must be admitted, includes some points, which, had they been carried into practice, would have reformed the Court of Chancery to a considerable extent; but there was one clause which was calculated to neutralize all the good effects arising from the bill—that which gave to the Lord Chancellor the power of altering or amending such orders as he might deem expedient. It is scarcely possible to conceive what could have led to the insertion of a clause so injudicious and inconsistent with the other provisions of the bill. With all its imperfections, however, it is to be regretted, that the bill was not carried beyond the first reading, and thus some slight chance afforded to the public of seeing partial reforms introduced into a Court, which has long retarded, instead of promoting, the ends of equity and justice.

The two questions of paramount importance, in which all ranks of the community have for some years past taken a lively interest, were again revived in the course of this Session—the Corn Laws and the Catholic Emancipation Bills. Opposing interests and opinions have long divided the country on these great points; and so important were they considered, that, in the late elections, the choice of the candidate was in many cases regulated by his sentiments in regard to them.

The friends of *Catholic Emancipation*, encour-

The proposition of the Government
length, after a short delay, from the
Canning, that able Minister, as the
Government, presented to the House of
at the beginning of March, those pro-
had been so long and so ardently
It was fully expected, and, indeed,
publicly announced, that these important
should at the same time be laid before
the Lords, by Lord Liverpool. The re-
sult, however, was suddenly seized with
dissension, which, ever after, deprived the
of enlightened and judicious counsels.
In consequence of this unexpected calamity, the
question of the Corn Laws was not
brought before the House of Lords till a later pe-
riod, and under very different cir-

umstances on this subject, submitted to
the House by Mr Canning, were evidently
of a spirit so moderate, as not to injure
the interests of either of the conflicting
parties. It was proposed to allow importation, on
a fixed scale of duties. When the average
price was such, which was to be taken weekly,
or quarterly, the import duty was to be
such as to prevent every shilling that the price exceeded
the duty was to decrease by 2s., until it
reached 10s. or upwards, when the duty was to
be such as to prevent each shilling that the price fell below
10s. was to increase 2s. per quarter.
The duty, founded on the same principle,
was proposed for barley, oats, &c. the protecting
duty being 10s. when the price was 30s.,

raged by the triumphs which they had gained in the House of Commons in 1821 and 1825, were anxious again to bring forward the question in this new Parliament. At an early period in the Session, therefore, a motion was made by Sir Francis Burdett, pledging the House to consider the disabilities imposed on the Roman Catholics of Great Britain and Ireland, with a view to their relief. Quite contrary, however, to general expectation, the motion was lost. This result, while it was welcomed by many, who had loaded the tables of the House with petitions against the measure, excited the grief and indignation of others, to whom the cause of religious liberty was dear. It was expected, that on the announcement in Ireland of the failure of the measure, some unhappy consequences might follow; but, very fortunately, the peace of the country was not in the slightest degree disturbed.

The unparalleled extent of distress which, for nearly two years, had prevailed throughout the manufacturing districts, both of England and Scotland, roused Ministers to devise some means of relieving the poor from a state bordering on starvation. In these circumstances, their attention was directed to a revision of the Corn Laws. Landholders and agriculturists, naturally afraid, from the evident leaning which the Cabinet had of late displayed to the principles of Free Trade, that no protection, or at least what they considered inadequate, would be afforded them, presented petitions against any change in these laws. Amid the keen contests between the commercial and *agricultural* interests, to which the proposed measure gave rise, all waited with the most intense

been formally announced, that these important measures would at the same time be laid before House of Lords, by Lord Liverpool. The re-
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Commons by Mr Canning, were evidently
ed in a spirit so moderate, as not to injure
tially the interests of either of the conflicting
es. He proposed to allow importation, on
ollowing scale of duties. When the average
of wheat, which was to be taken weekly,
60s. per quarter, the import duty was to be
and for every shilling that the price exceeded

with a decreasing rate of 1s. 6d. per quarter, till the price reached 37s., when the duty was to be 1s., and in proportion as the price fell, an increasing duty of 1s. 6d. for every shilling it decreased in price; and the protecting price of oats being 22s. when the duty was to be 7s. per quarter, with an increase or decrease of 1s. per quarter, as the price rose or fell. By these measures the facilities for importation would have no doubt been greatly increased. Thus wheat might be imported at the duty of 1s. in place of 12s. or 17s. (as it is at present), when the price reached 70s. By the Government scheme, when wheat stood at 60s., importation might take place at a duty of 20s., which, considering the expense of freight, &c., would prevent any great importation; but when it reached 65s., the duty would be decreased by 10s., and in this case the ports would be, to a considerable extent, loaded with foreign corn. The measures proposed by Ministers, appear indeed to be stamped with that moderation, and legislative wisdom, which have characterized the councils of the British Cabinet for some years past. Repeated attempts were made in the Committee, to raise the protecting point of wheat from 60s. to 64s., but without effect. Some modifications, however, were made by Ministers, on their resolutions in regard to barley and oats. The protecting price of barley was raised from 30s. to 32s., and the duty from 10s. to 12s. on its importation. This duty was to be diminished 1s. 6d. for every shilling, that the price rose, until it reached 40s. In regard to oats, the scale was to begin with 24s., *at a duty of 9s.*, diminishing in the same proportion of 1s. 6d. for every shilling that the price

increased. A nominal alteration was also proposed by Ministers to be made in the prices, by the substitution of the new Imperial measure, for the old quarter of eight Winchester bushels. According to this new standard, the price of wheat was fixed at 62s. per quarter, and the duty at 20s. 8d., the former being 2s., and the latter 8d. more than per Winchester measure. A similar modification was proposed in regard to the other species of grain. By this change of standard, the character of the original bill was not in the least degree affected.

That the principles of Free Trade to which the British Government seem anxious to return, are not in their full force applicable to the Corn Question, is readily admitted ; and therefore, as protection is absolutely necessary to the home grower, the great subject of contention is, to what extent such protection ought to be awarded. If the protecting price be established at too high a point in the scale, importation is thereby prohibited, and the commercial and manufacturing interests are reduced to starvation ; whereas, if sufficient protection be not given, the ports are loaded to excess with foreign corn, the home grower is discouraged, and the landed interest is impoverished. The middle point, perhaps, was sufficiently struck by Ministers in the above mentioned bill ; and had it not been afterwards virtually rejected in the House of Lords, by the overwhelming influence of the landholders, even the agriculturist would have been ultimately benefited by the change. By the introduction of the proposed scale of duties, he would *have been delivered* from those sudden

fluctuations in prices, which, if they sometimes enrich, as often ruin the farmer. A steady equalization of prices must certainly be far more favourable to the agriculturist, than the present system, which, to use the words of Mr Canning, "presents only a series of alterations between a drought and a deluge."

From the period of the lamented political demise of Lord Liverpool, the situation of First Lord of the Treasury, through motives of delicacy to his Lordship's family, remained for some time unoccupied. It naturally became a matter of great anxiety to know on whom his Majesty would confer the important office of directing the councils of the British Government. The expectations of the country rested on Mr Canning as the individual who, besides enjoying the favour and confidence of his Sovereign, was best fitted, from his eminent talents, to fill a situation so important and honourable. The opinion of all classes was not, however, unanimous in his favour. A large portion of the Aristocracy were by no means satisfied with the liberal spirit which Mr Canning had of late introduced into the councils and decisions of the Cabinet; and even among his own colleagues, there were some who, though they suppressed their sentiments, were still secretly averse to that enlightened policy which had been for some time pursued. As soon, therefore, as his Majesty had raised Mr Canning to the head of the Administration, and authorized him to make arrangements for the formation of a new Cabinet, no fewer than seven of his late colleagues, as if with *one consent*, resigned. The news of this *unexpected occurrence*, excited considerable surprise in

the country. The public mind now busied itself in speculation on the probable motives which had urged the resignation of these seven ministers at one time, and without the least previous correspondence. It was generally supposed that they were actuated by a personal dislike to the new Premier, but considerable suspicion existed in some quarters, that they wished to place his Majesty in such a dilemma, that he would be compelled to form an Administration, completely in unison with their own political sentiments. But whatever were their motives, their sudden secession from the ministry, afforded the Sovereign an opportunity of reconstructing the Cabinet, on principles worthy of the intelligence and information of the age. Though his Majesty was unexpectedly forsaken by some of his most experienced legal advisers, those men still remained who had superintended the affairs of the nation in its foreign relations, in its financial concerns, and in its domestic relations connected with finance. Mr Canning now perceived that all hope of constructing a Cabinet from its former materials was at an end, and therefore he naturally looked, in his embarrassment, to those men who, though they were nominally the opposition, had for some time almost uniformly supported the liberal measures of the Administration. The opposition, however, though they expressed their willingness to support the new Premier, treated at first his proposal, to form a coalition, with great coolness; and the more especially, as Catholic Emancipation was forbidden by his Majesty from being made a Cabinet question. As soon as it became known throughout the country that the proposal had been started of ?

coalition between Ministers and the Opposition Party, and that the proposal had met with the concurrence of the Sovereign, great interest was taken by all classes in the result of a measure, which promised to be of incalculable benefit to the Empire. Unwilling to surrender any important principle which they had been accustomed to maintain, the Opposition maturely weighed the consequence of the step which they were about to take. At length, after a long negociation, in which the great principles held by the Opposition were expressly understood to be in no degree compromised by their taking office, the expected coalition took place, and the Administration was formed. For several years, both parties had agreed in every important question connected either with foreign policy, or commercial regulations ; and in these circumstances, the arrangement which was now effected was both consistent and natural.

The meeting of Parliament after the Easter recess presented a highly interesting scene. The great majority of the late Opposition members, were now seated on the Ministerial side of the House, while a few adherents of the Ex-ministers occupied the Opposition benches. The regular business was for some time suspended, by the explanations which the Ex-ministers thought it necessary to make, of their motives in quitting office under Mr Canning. All of them, with the exception of Lord Melville, declared, that it was utterly impossible they could act in concert with and under the direction of a Minister, from whom they differed on the grand point of Catholic Emancipation.

The business of Parliament was still farther in-

interrupted for some days after their meeting, by the attacks which the new Opposition in both Houses made upon what they considered an “*unnatural coalition*.” Their feeble attempts in the House of Commons to frustrate the measures of Ministers, only exposed them to the ridicule and sarcasm of their more talented opponents. But in the House of Lords, the new administration was threatened with a determined and powerful opposition. In these circumstances, the Premier resolved boldly to pursue the same path, which had already secured him the favour of his Sovereign and the confidence of the people.

When the violence of the opposition had in some degree subsided, the highly important subject of the Shipping Interest was brought before the Commons by General Gascoigne. In 1815, the system of the navigation laws was so far improved, that foreign and home vessels were admitted on exactly the same terms into the ports of Britain. Anxious to get rid of this system of equal duties, the shipowners alleged, that from the comparative cheapness with which foreign vessels could be both built and navigated, it was impossible that British vessels could compete with them; and that, in consequence of this advantage given to foreign over British vessels, a great depression in the shipping had taken place. This, however, was justly considered by Ministers as the *ex-parte* statement of interested men. That the shipping, as well as the commercial and trading interests, must have suffered from the general depression in the country, cannot be denied; but the slightest reflection will show, that this *must not* be attributed to the greater *influx of foreign ships* into the ports. In 1826,

when the want of employment in the shipping was so great, the amount of foreign shipping was actually exceeded by that of the three years which followed 1815, when the new system commenced. And even the tonnage entered by foreign ships into the ports in 1825, was considerably more than in 1826, when so much distress was suffered. These facts prove, almost to a demonstration, that the distresses of the Shipping Interest must be ascribed to other causes than to that liberal system of policy which does so much honour to the British Government. By the clear statement of facts made by the President of the Board of Trade, the arguments of the gallant mover were completely overthrown, and the motion was accordingly withdrawn.

The attention of Parliament was called, soon after the recess, to the important subject of Trade with India. Since this trade was partially thrown open, in 1813, the value of the exports to India has been every year on the increase. But there still remain considerable restrictions, tending especially to favour the trade with the West Indies. It was chiefly in reference to these restrictions, that Mr Whitmore brought forward his motion for a select committee to inquire into the subject. From the progressive spirit of improvement which the commercial regulations of Britain are evidently assuming, the period may be anticipated when this matter, which is confidently intrusted to Ministers, shall be placed on a liberal footing, by making the trading connection of Britain with its Eastern colonial possessions, free and unfettered.

In the beginning of June, the state of the Finances was laid before the House of Commons by

Mr Canning. From the statement then made, it appeared, that there was a deficiency in the income of the present year, amounting to nearly three millions. This deficiency was stated to have arisen, not from the excess of the expenditure over the income, but from a deficiency in the surplus of income, which the Government has been in the practice of providing for the extinction of debt. This surplus was formerly fixed at 5,500,000*l.*, a sum which has not been this year fully realized. When it is considered that, in the course of the last five years, so many taxes have been repealed, and that the country has of late suffered a convulsion so dreadful, that the very foundation of its commercial prosperity has been shaken, it is certainly astonishing that the revenue is in so flourishing a condition. If, in a year of such unparalleled distress, the public treasury has been so well supplied, no apprehension can be rationally entertained about a deficiency comparatively so small.

But the question naturally recurs, how are three millions to be raised? It must either be obtained by additional taxes, or by borrowing the sum. The former alternative, in the overburdened state of the country, could not be resorted to, and therefore the Ministers wisely determined to have recourse to the temporary expedient of Exchequer bills, which, in the improving state of commercial affairs, will soon be discharged. It is highly probable, that ere another year elapse, commerce shall have so far recovered, from the baleful effects of excessive speculation in 1825, that it shall exhibit its wonted prosperous and healthful appearance. In these circumstances, the Ex-

chequer Bills will be fully discharged, and the treasury amply replenished.

About this time the Corn Bill, which had passed the Commons, was introduced into the House of Lords. From the powerful influence of the landed interest in the Upper House, it had been anticipated that the Bill would meet with considerable opposition in that quarter. But as it had been already sanctioned by the Ex-ministers, while they held their seats in the Cabinet, it was not expected that they would frustrate the measure. This, however, they completely accomplished, not by avowedly opposing the principle of the Bill, but by bringing forward an amendment, which had a direct tendency to defeat the purpose of Ministers. By the proposed regulations (as we have already remarked), corn could be imported and sold in this country, when the price reached 60s., with a duty of 20s., the duty decreasing by 2s. for every shilling of increased price. According to this system, importation would readily take place when the price reached 65s., with a duty of 10s. But by the amendment proposed by the Duke of Wellington, foreign corn could not be imported till the price reached 66s., which in fact amounted to a full restriction.

Conceiving that the amendment of the Lords was fatal to the principle of the bill, Ministers came to the resolution of abandoning the measure. This certainly was the most lamentable defeat that the judicious policy of an enlightened Cabinet could have experienced.

Immediately after the suppression of the Corn Bill in the House of Lords, an attempt was made in the House of Commons to bring into imme-

date operation the Act of 1822, after repealing that part of it which rendered it dependent on the Act of 1815. This proposal was in reality calling upon the House to sanction the importation of corn at 70s. instead of 62s., which they had already declared a sufficiently high protecting price. On this occasion, Mr Canning proposed an amendment, that all the corn then in bond, which might be imported for warehousing before the 1st of July next, should be admitted for home consumption, before and until the 1st of May 1828, on payment of the same duties which Ministers had proposed in their former bill. This measure, which passed both Houses, was well calculated to afford a temporary remedy for the evils which might ensue from the recent loss of the Corn Bill. The amount of bonded corn in the country, when the proposition was made to Parliament, amounted to 560,000 quarters. But the operation of the measure, was also intended to apply, to so much of the corn of Canada, for the importation of which, orders had been previously given, and for the amount of which, bills had been drawn, and in progress to be transmitted to this country. Some advantage at least may accrue from a plan which, though temporary, strikingly displayed the anxiety of Ministers to promote the best interests of the whole community. It is earnestly to be hoped, that, in the present Session of Parliament, a permanent law will be established, so framed as to reconcile the conflicting interests, and to set for ever at rest this important and much agitated question.

In the *beginning of July*, after a Session of

great interest, Parliament was prorogued. The only real benefit conferred upon the country in the course of the Session, was the temporary Corn Bill; but the enlightened and liberal spirit which prevailed in the House of Commons in the latter part of the Session, and under the new Administration, imparted to their deliberations a peculiar interest.

While the public mind was still glowing with exultation, at the ascendancy which liberality of sentiment had acquired in the formation of the new Cabinet, a fresh source of perplexity and distress arose, from the illness and death of Mr Canning. His health had been for some months evidently declining; and it is not improbable, that the multiplicity of cares which devolved upon him, in consequence of his new appointment, hastened that fatal termination of his disorder, which involved the country in the deepest distress.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the character of this popular statesman, which was so well known and so highly appreciated. The interests of nations appeared to his master-mind in their true aspect; and, when these were concerned, his counsels were directed by wisdom and humanity. He did not make every effort in behalf of Great Britain that might have been expected, yet, with a resolution full of energy, he openly recognised the rights of the republics of South America, and maintained, in regard to Portugal, the cause of constitutional governments. The apparent prejudices of his early days he had learned of late to disregard, though nursed in the very bosom of his nation, his political career, for some years past, had been such as to secure the confidence of

and the esteem of the people. The origin of that revolution which has taken place in the principles and measures of the British Government, is to be traced ultimately to the influence of public sentiment ; but no small share of the merit is undoubtedly due to Mr Canning. His plans for the benefit of his country were so clearly developed, and the foundation of the nation's welfare so solidly and securely laid, that, if the same line of policy be followed, the result will soon display itself in the rapid increase of the prosperity, and the fame of Britain.

The intelligence of Mr Canning's death was no sooner diffused through the empire, than the most intense anxiety was felt by all classes, in regard to the stability of that popular ministry, from whose exertions so many bright anticipations had been formed. But this alarm was considerably diminished, by the confidence which was generally placed in the choice of the Sovereign. Nor were the hopes of the country disappointed. His Majesty, on the death of his favourite Minister, showed his anxiety that the Administration should be conducted, on exactly the same principles, by vesting Lord Goderich with the office of Premier. Already well known to the public, from the ability with which he had discharged the duties of Chancellor of the Exchequer ; the appointment of his Lordship, was received throughout the country with general satisfaction. His remarkable public integrity, his enlarged views on the principles of national policy, his established popularity with all classes, seemed to point him out *as peculiarly well qualified to preside in the councils of the nation.*

The Ministry under the new Premier, besides including, with a very few exceptions, the same individuals which composed the Canning Administration, received some valuable accessions from the ranks of the Opposition. The office of Commander-in-chief, too, which had remained vacant since the resignation of the Duke of Wellington, was again, on the reconstruction of the Ministry, accepted by his Grace. To no man in the country, could the command of the army have been with more propriety intrusted; and, as his Grace no longer held a seat in the Cabinet, all objection to the appointment, on that ground, was completely obviated.

In a short time, a slight misunderstanding arose among Ministers, which appeared to indicate a want of stability in the Administration, and indeed, almost threatened its dissolution. Lord Goderich, without consulting his colleagues, had requested Mr Herries to accept the vacant office of Chancellor of the Exchequer; and, on his declining it, procured a letter from his Majesty, urging him to accept of it. The rest of the Ministers refused to recognise the nomination of Mr Herries as valid, on the ground that it bore the appearance of an appointment on the part of the King, without the sanction of his legal advisers. It was suspected besides, that Mr Herries was opposed to the liberal system of policy adopted by Mr Canning. On both these grounds, the Marquis of Lansdowne judged it due to the friends who had joined the Government along with him, to lay the seals of office at his Majesty's feet. The Sovereign, however, declined to accept the resignation of his Minister, expressing his earnest desire that the noble Mar-

to the administration ; for, in requesting the Marquis to resume the seals of the Home Department, his Majesty gave him his Royal assent to state, that his continuance in office, was a duty, consented to at the express desire of the King himself, and to prevent the dissolution of the Government, which on public and private occasions, his Majesty was anxious to preserve. These were considered important expressions, as indicative of the Royal mind, and as a pledge that the principles on which the Canning Administration had begun to act, would, if persevered in by his successors, meet with his Majesty's constant approbation and support.

At the close of the year, a speedy dissolution of the Cabinet appeared almost certain. The Premier had already expressed a wish to retire from office, and it was only by the importunity of his colleagues that he was prevailed upon to remain. Whether naturally of a weak constitution, or from

ciples, and likely to pursue that liberal line of policy, of which Mr Canning had given a most brilliant example.

It is scarcely possible to find in British history, a year more fruitful of interesting and important changes in the internal affairs of the nation, than 1827. The revolution which took place in the spirit and measures of the Government, by the elevation of Mr Canning to the Premiership, appeared to open up the brightest prospects of future improvement for Britain, for Europe, and the world. The political horizon may again be overclouded, but there will still shoot across the darkness, a bright gleam of hope that the principles of Canning will not be abandoned,—that the impulse which has been imparted to the progress of society, will at length eradicate from the Government every trace of that narrow and short-sighted policy, which is only worthy of the Court of Ferdinand. In the present state of the country, a Government proceeding on the principles which some years ago disgraced the British Cabinet, would not be tolerated. The voice of public opinion must be heard, and respectfully attended to. It would require even the unprincipled fearlessness of a Londonderry to bring back the old illiberal system, and again to arm the Government against an enlightened, a free, a high-minded people.

EUROPE IN 1827.

II.

FRANCE.

ON the accession of Charles X. to the throne, it was expected, and indeed had been promised, that a more liberal system of government would be followed, than had hitherto characterized the reign of the Bourbons. The liberty of the press, was accordingly maintained, and several other improvements introduced ; but the Ministry was not changed, and no confidence could therefore be placed in the sovereign, while he continued to be surrounded by advisers, so unprincipled as were Villèle and Corbière. Even the most violent Liberals appeared to expect, that the favourable presages of the new reign would be realized, and men of all parties, were disposed to a reconciliation with the Crown, at the expense of the Ministry.

In this divided state of public opinion, the King, besides still maintaining his unpopular counsellors, acted on the same principles with his late predecessor. One of the first acts of his reign, was a wanton invasion of Spain, in defence of a Monarch, who had betrayed the sacred trust reposed in him by his people, and had therefore forfeited *all title to respect or confidence*. The power of

the Jesuits, which had been evidently increasing in the latter days of Louis XVIII., was now more than ever encouraged by Villèle and Corbière. Respect was paid to superstitious ignorance, to an extent altogether incompatible with civil liberty. In proof of this, might be adduced, that disgraceful law of sacrilege, which passed the Chambers in 1825, annexing the penalty of death to offences against the holy wafer. The vague and undefined nature of this capital crime, must render the law a dangerous tool in the hands of the priest. One act, however, of the government, merits approbation from every liberal mind,—the recognition of the independence of Hayti, and also, though reluctantly, that of the South American States.

With such violence and recklessness did Villèle, for some time, pursue his unpopular measures, that the public mind was in a state approaching to rebellion. This was peculiarly the case, when, in the beginning of the past year, the ministerial project was published, for establishing the censorship of the press. A cry of alarm and indignation resounded from one end of France to the other. This *Vandal Law*, as it was appropriately termed by M. de Chateaubriand, was firmly resisted by all who were capable of appreciating liberty of thought, the inalienable birthright of man. It was considered by writers of all political opinions, by citizens of all classes, and by the greater part of the Journals, as a public insult to an enlightened nation, an evident declaration of war against intelligence, and a disgraceful attempt to arrest the progress of knowledge, and cover the human understanding with a melancholy gloom, allied to the darkness of the middle ages. In setting forth

such a proposition, the will of the Monarch was wholly regulated by that apostolical faction which placed itself between the King and his people, with the view of ruling the former, and rendering him a servile instrument for the oppression of the latter.

The French Academy of Sciences, as might have been expected, was alarmed on the announcement of the project, and agreed almost unanimously, to present an address to the King, stating the inconvenience and danger, which would accrue to literature from the measure, if it were carried into effect. When the address was discussed, twenty-eight members were present, of which four refused to vote. It is painful to perceive inscribed in this small minority, the name of Laplace; who, amidst the brilliant honours with which grateful science has invested him, must be considered, by this closing act of his valuable life, as having in some degree tarnished the lustre of his well-earned fame. His Majesty, by the advice of his counsellors, refused to receive the address which the Academy had voted, and thus showed the determination to stop his ears against the remonstrances of even the most enlightened of his people. Ministers accordingly, amid great opposition, and contrary to the avowed opinion of the Dauphin, carried their project into execution.

A temporary commotion was excited among the higher circles in Paris about this time, by the refusal of the Austrian ambassador, to address Marshal Soult and others, by the foreign titles with which they had been invested. A generous indignation was naturally felt at this insult put upon the Marshals of France; and although Villèle at-

tempted to apologise for the ambassador, it was with some difficulty that matters were amicably arranged.

In the beginning of April, a Royal Ordonnance was communicated to the Chamber of Peers, withdrawing the project of law relative to the press. This step was, no doubt, forced upon Ministers by the extraordinary revulsion of public sentiment which took place throughout the country on the first announcement of the measure. It was not improbable besides, that an attempt to place additional restrictions on the freedom of printing, might have been thrown out, had it come under discussion in the Chamber. So strongly indeed had public opinion been expressed on the subject, that serious consequences might have followed the passing of such a measure. No sooner, therefore, was the project withdrawn, than the utmost joy was manifested, at this popular triumph over the Ministers. When the Royal Ordinance was read in the Chamber, the Peers listened with astonishment and joy. The news rapidly spread, and that evening an illumination took place in several parts of Paris. It was generally thought, that Ministers had abandoned their intention, in deference to the nobility, and the well-known opinion of the Dauphin.

Another circumstance which increased still more the unpopularity of Ministers, was the ordinance issued on the 29th April, for disbanding the National Guard of Paris. These troops consisted of the choice of the citizens, amounting to 45,000 men, including 5000 cavalry. One of the *regiments of the National Guard*, on returning home *from a review*, happened to pass near the residence

of M. de Villèle, when they stopped, and the cries of "down with the Minister," "down with Villèle," were heard from the ranks. The Minister, enraged at this conduct, proceeded immediately to the Thuilleries, and recommended the instant dismissal of the Guard, with which his Majesty, of course, complied. A cry of indignation arose among the people on the publication of this ministerial measure; but the Minister remained unmoved, and the honourable services of this distinguished militia, both in support of the country and the Throne, were completely forgotten, amid the indignation which their recent abuse of Villèle had excited in the Royal Mind. The step was violently objected to by the Duke de Dondeauville in the Council of Ministers which framed the ordinance; but his protestation was ineffectual, and he immediately resigned. M. de Chabrol, Minister of Marine, also tendered his resignation for the same reason, but it was not accepted. The decree was certainly hasty and precipitate. A body of troops, composed, like the National Guard, of citizens, could not be expected to divest themselves of their zeal for the interests of the state, and to visit the open expression of their opinion on political topics with such summary punishment, was an extent of severity worthy only of Villèle.

After the stormy discussions, to which this obnoxious decree gave rise in the two Chambers, had been concluded, a most beneficial change in the Jury System was proposed. Several principles of the English law on this subject were adopted, and particularly those relative to the formation and publication of annual lists, and to the drawing by *lot of the Jurors*. The English law, however, still

differs from the French in the degree of confidence which they respectively put in the intelligence and good faith of the public functionaries. The former leaves nothing to their discretion ; it descends to the most minute details ; it attaches punishments to the slightest infraction of the law, and traces, even to the form, the acts which it prescribes : the latter, on the contrary, lays down only general principles, and leaves to the discretionary power of public officers, all the details of their application. The law of the 2d of May has not corrected all the defects of the former legislation on this matter ; but it has undoubtedly destroyed the most glaring. The Government, in renouncing its right of nominating Jurors, has rendered justice independent in those affairs at least, on which a Jury is called to pronounce judgment.

In England, the judgment by Jury is employed in all causes, both civil and criminal. Hence a considerable number of Jurymen are required ; and by the law, every man of any independence is liable to be called upon for this purpose. But in France, the Jury System is never resorted to in civil matters, and in criminal cases it is used only in the most severe. The number of men, also, capable of officiating as Jurymen, is very restricted when compared with the mass of the population. Such a state of matters can only be accounted for, by reflecting that the institution of Jury is of recent origin in France, and the general intelligence of the public, is not sufficient to give full operation to the system. The improvements introduced into this important part of French *Legislation* in the course of the past year, will be of great benefit to the country, and will, no doubt,

give rise to the still more complete adoption of this valuable part of the English system of legislation.

The budget having been brought forward by Ministers, after considerable discussion in the Chamber of Peers, was at length approved, and the Session closed towards the middle of June.

As soon as the Session of the Chambers had terminated, the Ministers procured a Royal Ordinance, establishing the censorship of the press. So strong had been the opposition to the measure when it was formerly before the Chambers, that Ministers were obliged to abandon it. Now, however, the censorship was imposed without leaving time for the discussion of the subject in the country; but public indignation was, nevertheless, strongly excited, and discontent was openly expressed with all the measures of Government. The Ministry were alarmed for the public tranquillity, and frequent meetings of the Council were held, to devise means for preventing the serious consequences to which they well knew this wanton attack on national liberty might lead. No disturbances, however, ensued, and the excitation of the popular mind very soon subsided.

In an early part of the summer, a rupture took place between the French and the Algerine governments, on account of an insult offered to the person of the French Consul by the Dey. The French government, on receiving intelligence of this event, despatched a squadron to demand an apology for the affront thus put upon the French King through his representative. Immediately on the arrival of the squadron in the port of Algiers,

the Admiral sent a note to the Dey, requiring ample reparation for the insult, and that one of the Dey's ministers should come on board his ship, and there, in the name of his master, and in the presence of the other European consuls, make a satisfactory apology. This request was refused; but the Dey invited the Admiral to the palace, with the view of discussing the matter in dispute; and it was at the same time stipulated, that if an amicable arrangement was not effected within forty-eight hours, hostilities should commence without delay. The result of the desired interview was, that the squadron blockaded Algiers, and the Regency began to take the necessary steps in defence of the town. Unwilling, however, to proceed farther without making every possible effort to prevent a war, the French Admiral despatched a second note to the Dey, urging him to accede to the proposal which had been formerly made. The Dey remained inflexible, and openly insulted the bearer of the note. On receiving this second refusal, the Admiral subjected the town to a strict blockade, which is still continued.

In France, in the meantime, the Ministry was every day becoming more unpopular. All classes viewed with indignation and disgust the restrictions lately imposed upon the liberty of the press; and in no instance was it more apparent than during the King's visit to Omer, where he was employed in reviewing the troops. As he passed along the road, instead of the usual "Vive le Roi!" with which the presence of their monarch is hailed, *the people* received him with the utmost coldness and indifference; thus displaying in a most signi-

ficant manner, the views which they entertained of his conduct in retaining, as his advisers, men who had lost all title to their country's confidence.

The progress of intelligence in France has of late been so rapid, that the Ministry, constituted as it was, could not be expected long to retain its influence. Their repeated attempts to violate the rights of the people in many instances, but especially that of the press, only called forth a more decided expression of the public voice in reprobation of their measures. A society, consisting of a hundred gentlemen of talent and influence, was formed at Paris, headed by M. Chateaubriand, which published and distributed political pamphlets gratuitously, thus eluding the ministerial law. The necessary consequence of such a step was, that the dissatisfaction with the measures of Ministers spread among the people to an alarming extent. Even in a quarter where independence could scarcely be expected, the Tribunal of Correctional Police, their designs were frustrated, and the individuals whom they wished to punish were openly acquitted.

In the beginning of November, M. Villèle, in consequence of the illness of M. Corbière, was appointed by a Royal Ordinance Minister of the Interior. Though both belonging to the Ultra party, these Ministers prosecuted their plans in different modes. M. de Villèle governed by finesse; M. Corbière with unblushing effrontery. The one endeavoured to apologise for his principles, the other boldly avowed them. Of the two, therefore, Corbière was most detested by the people.

A dissolution of the Chambers was now resolv-

ed upon, and an ordinance was accordingly issued to that effect. It was the intention of ministers, besides exerting their influence in the elections, to secure a majority of members favourable to their measures, by the creation of seventy new peers. The suppression of the Censorship on the Press, however, which of course followed the dissolution of the Chambers, was calculated to defeat the influence of ministers over the electors. No sooner therefore were the Journals delivered from the Censorship, to which they had been subjected for four months, than they poured forth torrents of abuse against ministers, urging the Electoral Colleges to display their independence by the nomination of liberal candidates. These suggestions had the desired effect in almost every part of the country. The number of members favourable to ministers was very small, compared with those who avowed themselves their opponents. In the nine Electoral Colleges of Paris, not one ministerial candidate was returned, and the most turbulent expressions of joy were heard throughout the city, on the announcement of the result of the elections.

M. de Villèle, perceiving that he was evidently opposed by the unanimous opinion of the country, now resolved to resign his office. Had such a result of the elections been anticipated, the dissolution of the Chambers would not have been proposed; but, as the unpopularity of the ministers had now reached its height, it became absolutely necessary, by the formation of a new cabinet, to calm the irritation which prevailed to such an *alarming extent*, and to prevent the serious *consequences which might follow the Ultra measures*

of the existing administration. The voice of an enlightened people had been raised, with an energy and decision which it would have been madness in the monarch to have resisted. Even the noblesse, on which ministers in a great measure depended, were incensed, both against the Censorship of the Press, and the proposal to elect a large number of new Peers. It was well known, too, that the Dauphin was in favour of a more liberal system of government, and a stricter adherence to the Constitutional Charter. Thus, by all parties, ministers were in a manner ejected from office, and the King compelled to reconstruct his government, on a principle different from that by which he had hitherto been regulated.

By the dissolution of the Cabinet, France has been delivered from a system of oppression and illiberal policy. Ministers, by their conduct, had sown the seeds of civil discord, which threatened to involve the country in another revolution. This was the work of ministers; they created and armed several hostile parties, and raised a factious spirit among the people. What course the new ministers will pursue, remains to be seen; but the mode in which the Cabinet is constructed, seems to presage the adoption of a better line of policy. Several liberal and enlightened men are united in the administration, with a few of its former members; and it is expected that, in the Session of the Chambers now sitting, various measures will be proposed, calculated to promote the internal improvement of the country. One great step has been taken by the King towards facilitating the progress of knowledge among the people, by se-

parating the direction of education from that of ecclesiastical affairs. Nothing has ever exercised a more pernicious influence over the intellectual advancement of the Continental countries, than the power which the Jesuits have been permitted to assert over education. It must be certainly considered, therefore, as of the utmost importance to France, that this obstacle to the improvement of its people has been at length removed. If, in defiance of this opposing power, intelligence has been rapidly spreading over the land, no rational doubt can be entertained, that with the destruction, or at least diminished influence of Jesuitical power, France will proceed with accelerated progress in the path of knowledge and improvement.

In the brief space allotted to this chapter, it will be impossible to take even a slight survey of France in its present improved state. Education, manufactures, the arts and sciences, are making the most astonishing progress in that interesting country. The great work of M. Dupin recently published, affords ample illustration of the truth of this remark. In point of cultivation and refinement, there is a marked difference between the north and the south of France. The thirteen millions of inhabitants in the northern departments, send to school 740,846 children; while the eighteen millions of the southern departments, send only 375,931 pupils. The natural consequence of such a disparity is, that the amount of the revenue received by government from the northern parts of the country, is, on account of their superior industry and activity, *one half* greater than that obtained from the *south*. In whatever point of view the two parts

of France are considered, whether in regard to their agriculture or commerce, in every thing may be perceived, an analogous and almost always a proportional difference. It is also remarked, that those departments of the south where popular instruction is most carefully attended to, are the most industrious and opulent.

Mechanics schools are spread through the whole kingdom, under the patronage of his Majesty and the Dauphin. From a central school in Paris, teachers are sent to almost every town, and a great part of the expense attendant on such an extended system, is defrayed by the Government, and by liberal donations from the nobility. For the use of these institutions, many valuable text books have been published, exhibiting the doctrines and facts of science in a popular and attractive form. M. Dupin, whose indefatigable exertions in the cause of popular instruction, entitle him to the gratitude of his countrymen, is engaged in publishing for the information of mechanics, small tracts illustrative of the most important parts of his great work to which we have already referred, and which, from its high price, is inaccessible to such individuals.

In consequence of the exertions made in France for the instruction of the labouring classes, the products of French manufacture, at the last public exhibition in Paris, excelled, both in quantity and quality, those of any former year. The precious effects of mechanics schools are already becoming visible in the development of the inventive genius of the artisans, and an evident improvement in the whole appearance of the arts and manufactures. *The enthusiasm of scientific men in France for the*

instruction of the people, has affected the whole spirit and tone of their literature. Manuals, abridgements, popular views of the sciences and arts, are every day issuing from the press, and a zeal for the enlargement of the boundaries of science, has in a great measure given way to an anxious desire for the wide diffusion of what is already known among all classes of the people.

The progress of science in France during the year, may be best known from the labours of its scientific institutions. Among these the Royal Institute holds the first rank, which chiefly limits its inquiries to the physical sciences. This department of knowledge, is alone entitled to any notice, as, with the exception of the researches of M. Massias, no accession has been recently made to the philosophy of mind. In Zoology, the laborious researches of M. Geoffroy St Hilaire, are peculiarly remarkable, especially as illustrating the habits of the Cameleopard which were hitherto in a great measure unknown to naturalists ; and the peculiarities of the Ornithoryncus, which has excited considerable attention among naturalists in Germany. M. Bory de St Vincent, has thrown much light upon the Oscillaria, which he considers as vegeto-animal substances. The chemical researches of M. Serullas upon the compounds of brome, and of M. Boullay upon the double iodurets, have enriched the interesting department of chemistry. Several memoirs were read in the Institute on the railways which have been introduced into France, and which will probably be of great advantage to the country. Astronomy has lost *much by the death of Laplace*; but Biot, and Arago, and Pons, still survive, and that sublime depart-

ment of human inquiry is the favourite subject of their contemplation.

The Geographical Society are prosecuting their inquiries with increased ardour, and their labours will no doubt contribute much to the enlargement of our knowledge of the different parts of our globe. The French are making rapid advances in agriculture, and during last year, horticulture has become a more prominent object of inquiry, a society for its promotion having been formed in Paris.

The Fine Arts have been prosecuted with unabated activity and success in France during 1827. An English Theatre has been opened in Paris, and succeeded to a wish ; a circumstance which strikingly indicates the rapid decay of that stupid nationality which has prevented so lamentably the liberal intercourse of nations. In the last exhibition of Paintings, which took place in Paris not many weeks ago, there has been a decided increase in the number both of paintings and statues. The liberal encouragement given to artists by Louis XVIII. has not been withdrawn by his successor ; and as an abiding monument of the comparative merits of the most eminent living artists in France, it has been determined to employ them in adorning a part of the Louvre with paintings, each in his own style. This scheme will give an impulse to the labours of the artists, which cannot fail to be most advantageous to the progress of the Fine Arts.

EUROPE IN 1827.

III.

AUSTRIA.

A MORE complete and regularly systematized despotism, can scarcely be found in Europe, than that which now exists in Austria. It was the wish of the late Emperor Joseph II. to introduce a more lenient system of administration. His intentions were excellent, but he was not possessed of sufficient influence or energy to accomplish his designs, which were unfortunately frustrated by the superior influence of the nobility and clergy. Amid such powerful opposition, the Emperor was discouraged, and very few reforms were really effected in the course of his short and troubled reign. His successor Francis has uniformly, since his accession to the throne in 1792, shown an inveterate hostility to even the most moderate improvements. The illiberal system of government, from which Joseph was desirous of delivering his subjects, has been restored in all its severity. The Jesuits alone have not been re-established, but other religious orders occupy their place.

Austria is composed of a great variety of States, of which several, recently subjected to its authority, will probably embrace the first favourable op-

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Francis of his people, that every idle calumny has a passport to his presence. The agents of the police, by a ducat or two, bribe the servants to betray their masters. Official spies are stationed in every quarter, who correspond regularly with the President of the Supreme Police at Vienna, or with the Emperor himself.

Under this absolute government, the people are permitted to enjoy only as much liberty as will enable them to raise a subsistence, but all attempts to attain a state of comfortable independence are carefully discouraged. The government eagerly grasp at every opportunity of establishing more firmly the authority of the Crown, on the one hand, and the entire subjection of the people on the other. No person is permitted to leave the country without obtaining permission from the police, under penalty not only of the loss of his civil rights, but of the confiscation of his property, provided he has no children. Should such an individual have no property, he is liable to be seized as a criminal; and if he return to Austria, he is condemned to hard labour for three years. By an edict of 1820, the present Emperor has prohibited the police from giving passports to the sons of noblemen, who might wish to prosecute their studies in a foreign country. The evident intention of such a decree, is to prevent the higher classes from imbibing those liberal notions which are the necessary consequence of an enlarged acquaintance with mankind. Still farther to isolate the country, young German students, who have always been considered as forming the majority of the dreaded Illuminati, are excluded from the Austrian States; and foreign books and journals, are sub-

mitted to a very strict censorship, and of late completely proscribed.

Prince Metternich, with whom originated the Holy Alliance is the mainspring of Austrian policy. This inflexible opponent of all modern improvement, fully accords in sentiment with his Royal master, and both pursue their course of oppression with a consistency worthy of a better cause. The line of policy which this Minister has uniformly pursued since his appointment to office, has rendered him the object of unqualified detestation, both in and out of Austria. That he is an able diplomatist cannot be denied, but his eminent talents have been hitherto prostituted to the support of an odious despotism. To his unprincipled exertions must no doubt be attributed the present condition of Europe, and the disgraceful attempts which have of late so frequently been made in the Continental countries, to sacrifice the comfort and happiness of thousands, at the shrine of legitimacy. Who but Metternich, has been the secret abettor of Turkish oppression? Had not that crafty diplomatist attempted to defeat the designs of the allies, the Sultan would have yielded, and Greece would have now been free. In regard to the education of the people, the opinions of the Emperor are very illiberal; in proof of which, it is only necessary to adduce his own words, when the professors were admitted into his Imperial presence in 1825. "I will have my subjects learn all those things that are useful in common life, and likely to keep them attached to our person and their religion. I don't want teachers who fill the heads of my students with that

nonsense which turns the brains of so many youths in our days." All the schools and colleges are under the immediate superintendence of government officers, who never fail to report any expressions uttered by the professors, which can be construed as indicating even the slightest approach to liberality of opinion. The certain consequence of such an accusation, is the suspension of the professor from office, and perhaps imprisonment for years. Government supplies the text-books by which, meagre as they are, the prelections of the professor must be closely regulated. The students are prevented from enjoying the advantages of private tuition, and to secure their dutiful submission to the Catholic church, they are required to confess six times every year. Such is the system of education to which the despotic Francis limits his subjects. Every liberal or enlightened sentiment is thus attempted to be crushed, as soon as it arises in the mind of generous youth; and by a decree of November last, the priests are granted almost unlimited power over education in all parts of the empire. With an education so contracted and illiberal, the public offices are necessarily occupied by men who, whatever may be their attachment to the person of the monarch, are quite unfit to discharge important duties. Hence, it is not unusual to find men raised to the most responsible situations in the government, whose ignorance on political subjects is inconceivable. In this state of matters, the financial condition of Austria is becoming every day more perplexing; and scarcely an individual can be found in the country, who is *capable of understanding and managing this essential department of internal policy.* But igno-

rank is not confined to the holders of civil offices; their military commanders are almost uniformly unacquainted with tactics; and officers are promoted by seniority, not by merit.

Among the higher classes, especially the nobility of Austria, a more enlightened spirit prevails than is to be found in ordinary society. There are several ducal families who, in point of wealth and influence, are almost on a level with the Emperor himself, and who, although infinitely inferior in intelligence to the English aristocracy, are respectable when compared with the inferior nobility of their own country. In the middling and lower classes of society, may be perceived those melancholy traces of moral and political degradation, which are the offspring of a despotic government. Accustomed to a widespread system of espionage, distrust and jealousy, cunning and hypocrisy are every where prevalent, even in the bosom of private families. By their education, too, they are taught to consider the will of their Sovereign as the only standard of moral rectitude. Should such a state of matters continue some years longer, the prospects of Austria are melancholy in the extreme. Thirty millions of human beings will descend to the lowest degree in the scale of civilization, and sink into a state of intellectual and moral torpor, from which ages will be required to raise them.

The system of legislation in Austria, partakes to a great extent, of the defects of its government. In 1782, Joseph II. promulgated his famous edict of toleration, establishing the equal liberty of all his Austrian subjects, whatever was *their origin or religious opinions*. The great number of Protestants in the country, has forced

the government to grant them toleration; but it is only of recent date that a Protestant Gymnasium and Faculty of Theology have been founded. The young men of that persuasion, however, are prevented from studying in the Universities of Germany; and their education is, therefore, limited to those branches which are permitted to be taught in Austria. A decree, passed in 1808, gives strict charges to the priests to prevent defections from the Catholic faith, and recommends also to appoint very able pastors to those places, where many Protestants are resident.

Although the famous edict of toleration, already referred to, still remains nominally in force; it is in several instances openly disregarded. In illustration of this remark, it is sufficient to notice the execution of the law, as far as regards the Jews. They are only permitted to dwell in the towns; and even there, they are prevented from purchasing property, besides being prohibited from trading in certain articles, particularly gunpowder and saltpetre. Of late, however, the Jews in Austria have assumed a higher rank, both in intelligence and wealth; and the Government has ordered the revision of the laws which have hitherto oppressed them. In the present state of Austrian policy, great reforms in the existing legislation cannot be expected; but, if a part only of those unjust regulations regarding the Jews, shall be remedied, it will certainly be a gain to humanity.

By the meritorious exertions of the Emperor Joseph II., the number of abbeys was considerably diminished; and those which still exist, are *under the controul* of the Government. The

bishops are chosen by the Emperor; and no bull of the Pope can be published without his consent. Subjected to the Imperial authority, the clergy are not possessed of a tenth part of the influence which is exercised by their order in France.

The natural consequence of the system on which Austria is governed, has been to alienate the affections of all classes, even the nobility, from the absolute Francis and the intriguing Metternich. So galling, so oppressive is the system, which for some years has been pursued, that the Emperor has found it necessary, for the preservation of his authority, to rivet the chains still more closely; and, therefore, he has assumed the reins of Government, even in the provinces, divesting the local magistrates and tribunals of the little power which they possessed, and not permitting them to dispose of a sum exceeding two and a half pounds Sterling. To allay the symptoms of disaffection which this decree excited, the Emperor was obliged to increase the military force of the provinces.

It has been the unvarying policy of Austria, to suppress the slightest desire for political freedom, by keeping the great mass of the people in a state of poverty and ignorance. The plan has fully succeeded, and the country is now incapacitated to assert its freedom. The Hungarians and the Austrian Poles may, and probably will emancipate themselves from the sway of Francis; but, before the states properly belonging to Austria will be in a condition to appreciate the blessings of independence, knowledge must be diffused *among all orders of the people*, and pro-

perty instead of being kept in the hands of a few be more equally distributed. Such a crisis may be obviated for a time, but it will certainly come. Though ignorance, superstition, and despotic power should combine their efforts to arrest the progress of intelligence in Europe, they must be fruitless and ineffectual. Such efforts have been systematically continued since 1813, when the Holy Alliance, that insane combination against the progress of the human mind, was first projected. Metternich was the originator of the scheme, and its intention was properly expressed in a letter from the Austrian Minister to Von Berstett, where he styles it an attempt to suppress the spirit which speaks of the liberty and rights of nations, and a perseverance in all the ancient forms and arrangements, wherever they still exist. The principles of this league against the liberties of Europe, have already become obsolete in some of the more enlightened countries, especially Great Britain and France, but they are still acted upon in Austria. Mental darkness, and political degradation, are there considered as the only legitimate spirit which can actuate the people.

No encouragement is given to the progress of the arts and sciences under the government of Francis ; but, among the higher nobility, the fine arts meet with ample encouragement, and music is universally cultivated. Several galleries of beautiful paintings are to be found in the private houses of Austrian noblemen in Vienna. The foreign policy of Austria has been equally despicable with its internal government. To say *nothing farther* of the prominent part it has taken in *the proceedings* of the Holy Alliance, what a me-

lunatic influence has it exercised over the German States ! The efforts of Metternich to arrest the progress of the sciences in Germany were commenced in 1819, when he succeeded in subjecting the Universities to the superintendence of a kind of police ; in limiting the representative institutions, and in establishing a political inquisition at Mayence. These regulations were continued till 1824, when the Austrian minister again came forward in the Diet of Frankfort, and proposed that a censorship of the press should be established, that the Universities should continue under the *surveillance* of the police, and the Inquisition at Mayence should prosecute their inquiries with increased ardour. At the same time, the representative assemblies in all the German States were modified so as to resemble those of Austria, where all freedom of debate is excluded, and the will of the Emperor, or his minister, supersedes all the improvements which might be proposed. Now, therefore, the Diet of Frankfort only re-echoes the language of the Austrian despot.

In Italy, Austrian oppression is felt to a dreadful extent. All the improvements which had been introduced into that country by Buonaparte were, after his fall, through the influence of Austria, rooted out. Since the restoration of the King of Naples, a representative system, which was expected to be established, has not been introduced ; and the Jesuits have been restored. To whom, in short, is Italy indebted for the state of degradation into which it has sunk, but to Francis and Metternich ?

The recent policy of Austria in regard to Turkey, is of that dark and doubtful character which

indicates a wish secretly to frustrate the designs of the Allies. Since the battle of Navarin, indeed, Metternich has avowedly expressed a wish that the Sultan would adopt conciliatory measures ; but it appears scarcely possible that the Porte would have adopted a line of conduct so evasive and dilatory, had he not been secretly assured of the support of Austria. It is well known, that for some time the representative of Francis at Constantinople, refused to join the Three Powers in remonstrating with the Porte ; and, though the letter addressed to him by Metternich might appear to exculpate the Austrian Court from having given any such instructions, yet the fact, that the same ambassador who had been ostensibly blamed, was in a few weeks rewarded with a mark of honour, throws an air of doubt over the whole transaction. The Austrian minister is a perfect pattern of duplicity and cunning ; and while he puts on the semblance of straightforward integrity, he makes use of those, who are blind enough to be duped by him as the tools, for the accomplishment of his detestable purposes. By the extensive arrangement and adroit management of his political intrigues, he is connected secretly, but not the less intimately, with every country in Europe. Liberal ideas are his abhorrence ; and if, in any quarter of the Continent, an attempt be made by even a small faction, to root out such sentiments and encourage passive obedience, Metternich is its mainspring and secret supporter. An absolute monarchy, a humbled nobility, an ignorant people, are the favourite objects of his contemplation ; and as he has succeeded in procuring *these advantages* to Austria, he is anxious that

they should be communicated to every European nation. His name has been long indented with all that is crafty and cunning in diplomacy, and with all that is illiberal in sentiment. Francis and Metternich, if their names are ever mentioned in future ages, will only be spoken of in connexion with those sentiments, and that conduct, which have rendered them odious, not only in Austria, but over all Europe.

EUROPE IN 1827.

IV.

RUSSIA.

SCARCELY a century has elapsed since Russia began to emerge from a state of rudeness, and to take a prominent place in the policy of the European States. Since the days of Peter the Great, however, no nation has equalled it, in the rapidity of its advancement in culture and civilization; and although situated at the remotest extremity of Europe, it has, by the wise policy of its Emperors, at length become acquainted with the arts and manufactures, as well as imitated the manners of the more polished countries. Learned foreigners have been invited by the Government to settle in the country; and to such an extent has the system been carried, that the principal manufactories of every kind have been committed to the superintendence of foreigners, and the professorships in the universities have been chiefly occupied by Germans, who, until the custom was abolished by a decree of the Emperor Nicholas, were in the habit of delivering their prelections in the German Language. The substitution of the Russ, as the *medium* of imparting instruction, must be considered as one great step towards improvement.

The late Emperor Alexander, though much controlled by peculiar circumstances, did every thing in his power towards improving the condition of his subjects. As an absolute monarch, it might be thought that his Imperial Ukaz was sufficient to accomplish what he might deem expedient ; but, though nominally absolute, the Russian Emperor must be regulated almost entirely by the opinion of his most influential courtiers, and the higher dignitaries of the Church. No circumstance has tended more to deceive foreigners, in regard to the absolute form of the Russian Government, than the Constitution of the Senate ; the members of which are nominated and paid by the Emperor, and which, instead of being a deliberative body, receives and promulgates the Imperial Ukases without the slightest alteration. But were their decrees framed by the Emperor, without the consent and secret sanction of the more powerful nobles, the consequences might be fatal to himself, and disastrous to the country. Thus in 1820, Alexander issued a Ukaz, declaring all the serfs in Livonia free, the plan to be carried into effect gradually, and to be completed in 1826. This was intended by the Emperor as an experiment, for the purpose of ascertaining what effect such a measure would have upon the public mind. An extraordinary impression was almost instantaneously produced all over the empire, and so enraged were the nobles against the Emperor, that had he attempted to pursue his benevolent plans, he would have shared the fate of his predecessor. By this decree, however, the peasantry were led to indulge notions of independence, which will never be eradicated.

The reign of the present Emperor Nicholas was ushered in with secret conspiracies and plots of every kind ; but by the prudence and firmness which he has exhibited, the country is now restored to a state of tranquillity. In the present degraded condition of the great mass of the people, a general insurrection is impossible. They are regarded, as has been well observed, "as things not men." Personal servitude, though abolished in some provinces at least by the decrees of Alexander, is still maintained by ignorance and custom. The nobility are in possession of the lands and public employments ; and though some of the serfs may, when established in large towns, amass wealth, they are still in subjection to their former lords, and obliged to pay them large sums annually styled *Obroks*. In every district the judges and officers are appointed by the nobility, the only privilege which remains to them as a remnant of their former independence. The principal positions in the army are filled by the nobles, and their rank is considered as dependent on the extent of their promotion.

The inhabitants of the cities may be viewed as holding an intermediate rank between the nobles and the peasantry or serfs. They are distinguished by their beard and dress from the nobles, as well as in their education and manners. Among the merchants of large towns, different degrees are established, each class enjoying peculiar privileges. Some are permitted to trade with foreign countries, while others are restricted in their commercial transactions within the limits of the empire.

The strength and soul of the empire is con-

posed of Russians, Cossacks, Poles, Lithuanians, and colonised Servians, all of whom belong to the Slavonic race. These various tribes, amounting in all to about fifty millions, united in one mass, and under the same government, form a powerful body, which, if not controlled, may prove the destruction of civilized Europe. This colossal power, ~~constitutes~~ the centre of that numerous race, which touches at once the White Sea and the Mediterranean, the deserts of Siberia, and the fertile plains of Italy. Such an extent of country, peopled by half-civilized men, may yet, unless European policy prevent it, pour forth its barbarous hordes, and once more extinguish the light, and destroy the liberty of the Continental nations. Amidst the desire of conquest, however, which has been always attributed to the Russian Emperors, there are several circumstances which must tend to counteract it, not the least powerful of which is the introduction of the manners and customs of the European States. The higher nobility, after having accomplished their usual travels in France and Germany, return to their homes, carrying with them the manners of a more refined society. Several societies are instituted in the large towns for political discussion; and the public attention has been drawn to such subjects by the valuable, though simple writings of Demidoff. Every improvement introduced into Russia renders attempts to subjugate Europe the more improbable; and hence the internal condition of that country is of the utmost importance to the well-being of the neighbouring States. The arts and sciences, which have been making *slow* but certain progress in

Russia since the days of Peter the Great, are gradually introducing new tastes, new desires, and new wants. Industry and commerce, those constant enemies of war, are protected by Government; for it is from the labour of the people that the modern Governments draw all their resources, and the extension of the relations of exchange and traffic, by binding more closely the ties, which connect Russia with the other nations, will at length render its happiness dependent on their prosperity.

From the anxious desire of the late Emperor to elevate the condition of his people, education was diffused through a great part of the empire, by means of Lancasterian schools, instituted at the expense of Government. Since the accession of Nicholas, these seminaries have not increased in number; and considerable indifference has been manifested as to the state of those which still exist. It is a somewhat remarkable circumstance, that, in the present comparatively uncivilized condition of Russia, where every effort might be expected to be made by the Emperor for the instruction of his subjects, he appears to entertain a dread of those sciences which lead to discussion; and accordingly he has prohibited, since the beginning of last year, the Lectures on Philosophy from being delivered in any of the Universities of the empire. On what grounds such a decree was issued, we know not, but it most probably originated in the offence which was taken at some expressions used in the opening discourse of the Session 1826-27, delivered by Professor Davuidoff, *on the possibility of philosophy as a science*. This discourse, though in consequence of some expres-

sions contained in it, the author was dismissed from his professorship, has been permitted to be printed at Petersburg, and warmly eulogised in several periodical Journals.

Owing to the general ignorance of the Russian population, literature meets with little encouragement, unless among the higher classes of society; and therefore authors, instead of being prompted to publish their works by a desire of gain, have been almost always actuated by the desire of being useful to their country. The most distinguished authors have hitherto been of noble rank, or belonged to the class of official men; and, much to the honour of Russia, literary fame has generally opened the way to political advancement. In the earlier periods of Russian literature, which can scarcely be traced farther back than the middle of last century, authors by profession were altogether unknown in the country; and indeed, until very lately, it was impossible to gain a subsistence by the prosecution of literary pursuits, however successful.

Recently, however, a new class of society has arisen in Russia, who, in the prosecution of literature and science, follow out an honourable, and in some instances a lucrative, profession, and who, by the respectability of their numbers, as well as their influence over the public mind, have attracted the notice of Government. But while the Emperor extends his countenance and protection to literary men, he has permitted several literary associations to exercise privileges which are by no means favourable to the progress of education and knowledge. Thus, by a regulation of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, passed on the 25th of July

1825, all the printers of the Empire are prohibited, under penalty of confiscation, from reprinting, without express authority, the books and memoirs published by it. The same prohibition is made in a regulation of the University of Dorpat, dated 4th June 1820. These decrees, however, though not forbidden by Government, must not be considered as affecting the rights of authors in general, or as carrying with them the force of a law. In regard to the rights of authors of dramatic works, intended for representation, they are regulated by the ordinance issued on the 15th of May 1825. This Imperial Ukaz determines the obligations of each artist, and of each individual attached to the service of the theatres, and fixes the rights of the authors and translators of dramatic works, as well as the remuneration which shall be granted them.

The present Emperor appears, on the whole, to favour the attempts which are made to impart instruction to the lower classes of society. Scientific and literary men receive considerable encouragement, and historians and poets of great eminence have recently produced works, of which Russia may boast. In the sciences, the labours of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Petersburg have contributed some valuable memoirs, especially on physics. The Fine Arts have received ample encouragement from government. Agriculture is making rapid progress in some of the provinces; and travellers often express considerable surprise, at finding the most recently invented agricultural implements in common use, on the estates of some of the wealthier noblemen.

But while the internal improvement of the country is advancing with such rapidity, the Emperor has attained an influence in the general policy of Europe, to which the vast extent of his territory alone entitles him. The ambitious desire of conquest which has too frequently been displayed by the monarchs of that immense empire, has naturally excited the jealousy of the other European powers, and led them to devise means for preventing the aggrandisement of the Russian territory. On this principle, the triple alliance in favour of the Greeks, was formed, of which Russia formed a party. Had Nicholas been allowed to aid the Greeks, unconnected with the other powers, Turkey would probably have been overrun with herds of Russian soldiers, and some pretext found for appending it to the already overgrown territory of the northern Autocrat. Such a termination of the dispute with the Porte would have been productive of the most disastrous consequences to the whole of the nations of Europe; but it is to be hoped, that, by a firm adherence to the treaty, Great Britain and France will check the ambitious designs of the Russian Emperor, and at the same time effect the liberation of the oppressed Greeks. It was by no means to the honour of Alexander, that he took an active part in the plans and proceedings of the Holy Alliance. Now, however, by his death, the spell which bound the unhallowed compact together is broken, and a more liberal spirit is rapidly spreading over the continental nations—a spirit which all the despots in Europe will be unable to eradicate.

The war, which has for some time been carried

on between Russia and Persia, is at length terminated, and the former country has gained an accession to its territory. The vicinity of the British possessions in India, to the scene of conflict, gave to the war a peculiar interest, but the alarm which it excited has passed away, and peace is at length restored. It is much for the interest of Russia, that she preserve a friendly connection with Britain, from the advantage derived by her commerce. But, amid the various changes in the political affairs of Europe, the colossal power of the North must be strictly watched, and every attempt to enlarge her territory, at the expense of any other country, carefully frustrated by a judicious policy. It is only by these means, that the danger arising from a country of such overwhelming magnitude, will be obviated, and the peace and prosperity of the European States secured.

EUROPE IN 1827.

V.

SPAIN.

THAT picture of melancholy wretchedness, of intellectual and moral degradation, which every where meets the eye of the traveller in the Peninsula, has been almost uniformly becoming more shocking since the accession of the Bourbons to the crown of Spain in the beginning of the last century. Under Charles II, the last of the Austrian dynasty, the effects of a despotic government were striking : but in the reign of Ferdinand VII., they are palpable in every town and in every village of Spain. That unhappy country, exposed to the baneful influence of Monks and Camarillas, has at length sunk into a mere cipher in European policy. Once and again has Ferdinand vowed to his people that the government would be placed on a more liberal footing; but equally regardless of his honour as a man, and his duty as a monarch, he fearlessly tramples on his most solemn promises, and his most sacred obligations. Instead of regarding the welfare of the people, as the foundation of all political institutions, he recently declared, that whatever were the wishes of the people, " he would never depart from that absolute power with which heaven had invested him." *This determination, however, cannot long be re-*

tained. The peace of Europe, the state of degradation into which Spain has been sunk, demand the speedy abolition of these two great social deformities, Despotism and Priestcraft. Under the influence of these scourges, the inhabitants of the Peninsula have degenerated into an ignorant, weak, superstitious race; and never will Spain regain her rank among the nations, until the absurd despotism of Ferdinand and the Monks shall be completely destroyed.

No better symptom of the precarious condition of Ferdinand's government could be adduced, than the fact, that it is necessary, in order to preserve the peace of the country, to call in foreign aid. By this system of force, the flame of liberty is for a time suppressed, but not extinguished; and in all probability, the time is not far distant, when it will again burst forth with terrific violence, sweeping before it the whole host of Jesuits, and Apostolicals, and Court retainers, and regenerated Spain shall emerge from the ruins of her political and superstitious despotism, to raise the character of her people, and exhibit to the world a noble instance of the beneficial effects of liberal institutions. Even the military occupation of Spain by the French, has not been sufficient to prevent the occasional display of the spirit of independence among the people. This has been attributed by Ferdinand, with some degree of justice, to the proximity of his territories to the constitutional government of Portugal. There is indeed a social incompatibility between these two countries which, considering their relative position, cannot long subsist. The Spanish monarch, therefore aware of the influence which a liberal government

in their immediate neighbourhood might have upon his people, exerted himself for some time secretly to undermine the Portuguese constitution. His plans, however, have been happily frustrated by the prompt and decided remonstrance of the British and French Governments.

The attempts of the Spaniards to assist and encourage the Portuguese rebels, were incessant in the earlier part of 1827. Supplies of arms were secretly afforded by the Spanish authorities, and a safe asylum on the frontier in case of a defeat. In vain did the Portuguese Cortes complain of this conduct, as being an infringement of the law of nations. Ferdinand refused to listen to the complaints of a government which he did not recognise. At length, however, he was compelled, by the interference of the French and English Courts, to adopt measures for the discouragement of the Portuguese rebels, by sending a body of troops to the frontier, with express orders to disarm and disperse those of the Royalists who sought a refuge within the Spanish territories. No sooner had the corps reached their destined posts, than a spirit of disaffection began to appear; and it was not until decided steps were taken by the Spanish government, that good order was restored in the army.

Since the period of the restoration in 1823, the Spaniards have been prevented by the presence of the French soldiers from any open display of that secret dissatisfaction which is generally felt with Ferdinand's government. In various provinces, however, and particularly Catalonia, symptoms of turbulence have occasionally appeared, threatening that province with all the horrors of a civil

war. In the months of August and September 1825, an insurrection burst forth in that with considerable violence. The insurgents attempted to gain possession of the fortress of Tortosa on the Ebro; but their efforts were defeated and they were soon after dispersed. By a coincidence, their attempts were renewed at Tortosa, but without success, in the same month 1826.

Last year the plans of the insurgent more matured. Under the chiefs, Llob Trillas, a third attempt was made to get possession of Tortosa. It was intended to massacre constituted authorities and principal persons in the city, and to make themselves masters of the town. The insurgent chiefs roused the Royalists, but vainly attempting to persuade them that they did not enjoy the necessary degree of loyalty. A circular was immediately issued by the Audiencia of the province, contradicting the insurrectionary assertion, and stating that the King would maintain the full exercise of his authority. But, notwithstanding the assurances contained in this circular, the rebel army increased to the number of 10,000 men. Prompted by the monks and apostles of the insurrection became every day more active both from its extent and importance. In accordance to the views of the Insurgents, it is sufficient to mention, that they considered the absolute government of Ferdinand as too much inclined to liberality, and their chief desire was to have the Inquisition restored, and all who had filled the Cortes banished.

The grand insurrectionary movement, arranged, should take place in the begin

April. At that time, accordingly, several insurgent chiefs appeared at the head of armed bands, and published proclamations, in which they asserted that the throne was in danger, and that the country was governed by secret associations. Prompt measures were taken to quell the insurgents, and, in a short time, they were completely dispersed.

As soon as the news of the insurrection reached Madrid, considerable alarm was excited among the Liberal party, but the Apostolics secretly rejoiced, in the thought that they would soon be able to extinguish the last spark of liberality in the country. Ferdinand, anxious to restore tranquillity, applied, but without success, to the French officers in command at Barcelona and its neighbourhood, to take measures for the protection of his subjects. Government troops were sent against the rebels, and defeated them in several places, capturing the principal chiefs, some of whom were shot. On the 30th April his Majesty issued a decree, granting pardon to those who should lay down their arms, and retire to their houses.

The insurrection, thus temporarily suppressed, re-appeared in July, chiefly in the districts of Manresa, Vich and Gerona. In this movement, Jeps del Estang, who had been lately pardoned, was the principal leader, assuming to himself the title of Commandant-General of the Royalist Divisions. Under pretence of religion and an absolute King, this General drew around his standard great multitudes in every district through which he passed. Every day matters assumed a more critical and threatening aspect. In the course of a few weeks, the whole province, with the excep-

tion of Barcelona and several other armed fortresses, was in the hands of the insurgents; and even the troops sent against them, in several instances, declared in their favour.

Ferdinand, determined no longer to permit his name to be abused for the purposes of revolt, published, in the beginning of September, an order to increase the number of the troops in the garrisons of Catalonia. At the same time, he authorized the Governor of that province to grant an amnesty to all the rebels who should lay down their arms without delay, except the chiefs; but those who should refuse to surrender within the time appointed by the General, should be shot without mercy.

It had been industriously circulated by the insurgents, that they were secretly favoured by the King. In contradiction to this report, therefore, the Governor published the instructions which he had received from his Majesty, to pursue the rebels, and put them to instant death. The insurgents boldly proceeded in their operations, unawed by the proclamation of the Governor, and confident of ultimate success. They issued on the 8th a manifesto, repeating their determination to free Ferdinand from the ill-advisers by whom he was surrounded, and who prevented him from knowing the real wishes of his subjects. That they might conduct their plans with greater effect, they appointed a junta of Government, consisting of the principal leaders, with full power to direct the army in every place where the insurrection prevailed.

The Spanish Government was now seriously alarmed for the consequences of the insurrection

in Catalonia. Various measures were proposed for the restoration of peace; but it was at length resolved, that Ferdinand should set out in person for that province, to convince the insurgents that he was under no controul, but in the free and unfettered exercise of his supreme authority. This step was perhaps the best that, in these circumstances, Ferdinand could have adopted. It is astonishing what an influence the presence of a monarch, weak and pusillanimous though he may be, exerts over the popular mind. Divested of regal pomp and pageantry, Ferdinand is the last man in Spain, who, by his presence alone, could awe a mob into submission; but his station might succeed in effecting what neither the influence of his person nor of his character ever could accomplish.

In the mean time, the rebels were advancing without any opposition. After having received 8000 dollars from the inhabitants of Vendral, they entered Reus on the 9th September with a force of 2000 men, and immediately levied contributions. Emboldened by success, they issued a manifesto, declaring that Ferdinand had forfeited the Crown, and proclaiming Don Carlos King. The Spanish Government now determined to make every exertion for the suppression of the rebellion. Count D'Espagne was appointed Commander-in-chief of all the troops employed against the rebels. The army of the Tagus was ordered to march towards Catalonia under General Sarsfield. The rebels took possession of Vich, which was in the hands of the King's troops. In several other engagements, also, they had proved victorious.

The Junta at Manresa published a new proclamation, stating that it was their wish to restore tranquillity, and that the insurgents would lay down their arms the moment a sufficient security was given them by the King for the fulfilment of his good intentions.

Immediately on his arrival in Catalonia, Ferdinand renewed his decree of amnesty to all who would lay down their arms within twenty-four hours, and offered to accede in all reasonable respects to the demands of the rebels. His entry into Tarragona was hailed with enthusiasm by all classes of the inhabitants. It had been the object of the insurgents, in taking up arms, to have the monarchy established on the same footing as before the revolution. No sooner, therefore, did Ferdinand appear in the midst of them, than they received him with applause, imagining that he would never punish men who had risen, not against him, but in his favour. The proclamation of pardon, issued by the King, produced a good effect, and the more readily, as the rebels were expelled from Reus. As soon as it was known at Puycerda, the new head-quarters of the rebels, the town was instantly evacuated, and the insurgents proceeded towards Vich, the governor of which, on receiving the same decree, retreated towards Manresa. This latter town determined to hold out to the last.

The influence of Ferdinand's presence, and of the proclamation of the amnesty, were soon perceived in the surrender of the great majority of the rebels. Some, however, of the chiefs fled to the mountains, and refused to yield obedience to *the Royal authority*. Ferdinand issued orders for *the preparation* of a correct list of all the insur-

gents who surrendered—a step with which many were so displeased, that they repented of their submission.

All the exertions of the monarch, however, to put an end to the insurrection, proved unavailing. The rebel troops were still of sufficient strength to defeat the forces of General Monet, and compel them to retire and march on Manresa. The Count d'Espagne, too, on his return to Vich, was attacked by a body of insurgents in ambuscade, who maintained their ground for some time with great vigour, but were at length dispersed. With the view of terminating the rebellion as soon as possible, by preventing any great accession to their strength, proclamations were issued by the Captain-general of Catalonia to disarm the whole population. The rebel chief, Ballester, having been arrested, was executed at Tarragona.

It was absolutely necessary, that Ferdinand should adopt severe measures for the suppression of the rebellion, as the French government had resolved to withdraw their troops from the country. Towards the middle of November accordingly, all the French troops stationed at Barcelona, quitted that place, on their return to France. But this appears to have been an insulated measure, quite unconnected with the general abandonment of the Peninsula by the French army. To preserve the peace of Catalonia, Ferdinand resolved to remain for some months in Barcelona. Towards the end of the year, however, the insurrection again burst forth, headed by Jeps del Estangs, and bands of insurgents appeared in Valencia. They were attacked by the troops from Tortosa, which had *recrossed* the Ebro for that purpose;

but the rebel army was so numerous, that it kept its ground with surprising vigour. It will be very difficult, in the present state of the Spanish government, to preserve the country from being exposed to civil dissensions of every kind. An absolute monarchy, a degrading superstition, can give rise to no other feelings among the people than discontent and disaffection. Every attempt to enlighten the people is completely discouraged; and hence all their efforts to release themselves from the political thralldom to which they are subject only exhibit their moral weakness and unfitness to enjoy a state of freedom. Could the influence of the priesthood be diminished, and knowledge diffused among the people, there might still remain some hope of unhappy Spain.

If such be the state of the country, though subjected to the occupation of the French troops, the prospect is dismal when they shall have marched for France, as they are expected to do, in the course of a few months. Should a general insurrection then occur, the pusillanimous Ferdinand has not power to resist. Through want of pay and provisions, discontent prevails among his troops, and little assistance can therefore be expected from them. Should he depend on foreign aid, it is more than probable, in the present state of Europe, that he would find himself unfriended. No government will undertake to support a monarch, who has already shown himself unworthy of the situation he holds, and destitute of every claim, either to the respect or the confidence of his people.

Under such a government as that of Spain,

sciences and arts, will never flourish. Some feeble attempts have been made, especially by the Royal Academy of History at Madrid, to awaken in the Spaniards a taste for the cultivation of literary pursuits; but all their efforts have been hitherto ineffectual. That institution has, to its honour, made many successful inquiries into the early history, both civil and literary, of the country. At present, Spanish literature, indeed, may be resolved into the researches, which the few Spaniards, who prosecute literature, have instituted into Spanish antiquities; and perhaps the publication of the ancient glories of Spain, may awaken in her degraded sons, that patriotism and chivalrous spirit, which may animate them in claiming their rightful independence.

It is a very remarkable circumstance, that the absolute Ferdinand, who has considered knowledge as dangerous to the throne, issued in the early part of the past year, an order to M. Gomez de la Cossina, and several other writers, to prepare and publish a *Biographical Dictionary*, including notices of all the Spaniards who have distinguished themselves from the remotest period, to the end of 1819. That the editors might perform their task with the greater accuracy and ease, the King has also given them free access to all the records and libraries of the kingdom, and commanded the authorities and heads of corporations, to furnish them with all the documents which may be in their possession.

In Spain, degraded though it be in a political point of view, great efforts are made by several patriotic institutions, to promote the welfare and

happiness of the people. In Valencia, for example, one of those associations is established, which, since the period of its first formation, in the end of the last century, has been unceasingly fulfilling its original intention of diffusing elementary instruction, improving industry, manufactures, commerce, navigation, fisheries, and rural economy. A cabinet of natural history, and a collection of machines, are connected with the establishment. It is pleasing to observe, that such a society exists in the town where, during the past year, more than one instance of priestly domination has occurred.

The only literary production of importance which has recently appeared at Madrid, is the Geographical and Statistical Dictionary of Spain and Portugal, by Dr Mignano, which is at present in course of publication. This great work, which it is calculated will include 26,000 articles, will, when completed, afford much valuable information as to the topography, natural productions, and literary status of every part of the two kingdoms it embraces.

In conclusion, it may be noticed, that the pernicious influence of an illiberal priesthood, is the principal cause of the ignorance which prevails in the Peninsula. The people are precluded from every source of information, and even taught by the priests, that knowledge is inimical to the happiness and tranquillity of the country. In pursuance of this intention to arrest the progress of knowledge, not many months have elapsed since *the Archbishop of Toledo published, in his diocese, an edict, prohibiting the people from the use*

of every kind of books, except prayer-books. All foreign works, all the French and English Journals, are also forbidden. At the request of this Bishop, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Madrid, has requested the Ambassadors from the various countries, not to allow the Journals they receive to be read in the capital.

EUROPE IN 1827.

VI.

PORTUGAL.

THE present situation of Portugal is of singular importance. For many years past, the ancient Absolute Monarchy has been tottering in this country, and now it has, at length, given place with the consent of the monarch, to a Constitutional form of government. It is extremely doubtful, however, from the fluctuating nature of public opinion, and from the power of Spanish influence in perverting the minds of the nobility, whether the more popular system will long remain in a state of security.

The diversified changes which the Portuguese Government has undergone, may be viewed in connexion with Spanish politics, as having given rise to the glorious independence of the South American States. From the year 1807, when King John VI. was compelled to embark for Brazil, leaving his dominions in Portugal in the hands of a Regency, may be dated the commencement of important changes in the policy both of the old and the New World. On his arrival in his South American dominions, the Portuguese monarch established Brazil as a separate kingdom, and by opening the ports, encouraged a system of

commerce with all nations. The spirit of independence which invariably attends an enlarged acquaintance with men and manners, soon spread among the Brazilian people to such an extent, that though invited to return to Europe in 1816, King John judged it necessary, to the maintenance of his authority, that he should remain in Brazil. Portugal, on the other hand, began to feel the disadvantages arising from the monarch's absence. Far from the seat of government, the power of the Regency was gradually weakened, and, on almost every point, great inconvenience was experienced from the delay occasioned before the will of the King could be ascertained. The resources of the country, besides, were in a great measure exhausted by the demands made upon it to support the war between Brazil and the provinces of Rio de la Plata. These circumstances raised a spirit of discontent among the people, which, however, did not fully display itself till the commencement of the Spanish Revolution in 1820.

The Regency now perceived that matters were approaching to a crisis; and, therefore, to avert the threatening danger, resolved, by the advice of Count Palmella, to summon a Cortes for the redress of grievances and the reformation of abuses. Nothing, however, could check the revolutionary spirit. Anxious to restore peace in Portugal, the Count sailed for Brazil, with a view to represent to the King the alarming state of the country. On his arrival, the enlightened minister advised the monarch to yield so far to the wishes of the people, as to send his son, in the capacity of Viceroy, to Portugal, with a constitutional charter. While this subject was under consideration, the

Brazilian revolution broke out in 1821, and the Portuguese constitution, at the desire of the people, was readily adopted by the King and his son. After having suffered great perplexity of mind, the Portuguese monarch, at length, resolved to set sail for Lisbon, leaving Don Pedro as Viceroy in Brazil. Immediately on his arrival in the Tagus, on the 3d July 1821, he was taken prisoner. The revolutionary Cortes then demanded the return of Don Pedro to Portugal; but the Brazilians, embracing the opportunity to assert their independence of the mother country, insisted that he should assume the crown of Brazil. He wisely adopted this latter step, and accordingly proclaimed the independence of the Brazilian empire; but neither its freedom, nor its separation from Portugal, was recognised in Europe, until the treaty formed by the mediation of England, was ratified at Lisbon in November 1825.

After the establishment of the constitution in Portugal, many were still secretly prepossessed in favour of royalty, and anxiously waited a favourable opportunity to effect a counter-revolution. The march of the French army into Spain, in 1823, to support the rights of Legitimacy, encouraged them accordingly to revolt; and they soon received a powerful accession to their cause, in the Infant Don Miguel, the King's second son. A large body of the people now appeared to favour the Royalist faction; and it is not improbable that the constitution would have been soon overturned, had not the King happily proclaimed a free government. A Constitutional Junta was then established, to draw up a charter. This they accomplished in the course of a few months, to

the satisfaction of the King ; but this charter was never promulgated.

In 1824, a strange attempt was made, apparently at the instance of Don Miguel, to infringe upon the personal liberty of the sovereign, which, however, he dexterously evaded, by taking refuge on board an English war ship, in the Tagus, where he succeeded in recovering his authority.

At this time, the agitated state of the public mind imperiously called for some conciliatory arrangements on the part of the King. On the 4th June, accordingly, he issued a proclamation, dissolving the Constitutional Junta, restoring the ancient monarchy, and promising to summon a Cortes for the promotion of the public good, in its most extended sense. This measure, had it been speedily put in execution, might have been of great advantage to the nation ; but as no time was fixed for the meeting of the Cortes, little hope could be entertained, even of its ultimate accomplishment.

The distracted state of Portugal, for some time, drew off the attention of the King from the important change which had occurred in Brazil. That country had become independent, and Don Pedro been declared Emperor. King John at first remonstrated with his son, but to no purpose ; and at length, after a protracted negotiation, he agreed to follow the advice of England, his ancient ally, by a full recognition of the independence and separation of Brazil. As, however, a question might afterwards arise, whether, by this treaty, Don Pedro did not lose all title to the crown of Portugal, the King took the precaution, both in his first letters *patent*, addressed to the Brazilians, and in the second, addressed to his Portuguese

subjects, of mentioning the name of Don Pedro, under the designation of his heir and successor.

On the 10th of March 1826, King John VI. died at Lisbon. A few days before his death, he had appointed a temporary regency, consisting of his daughter, Donna Isabel Maria, and a council, with the view of conducting public affairs during his illness, or in case of his decease, "until the legitimate heir and successor to the crown should make other provision in this respect." The regency accordingly lost no time in communicating to Don Pedro the intelligence of his father's death. The new sovereign now found himself in a perplexing situation. Though the acknowledged successor to the Crown of Portugal, he was the equally acknowledged Emperor of Brazil, which, by treaty, he had recognised as not only independent, but as a separate kingdom from that of Portugal. A breach in the order of succession, was therefore inevitable, and the right of declaring in what line the succession of both Crowns should run, was obviously vested in Don Pedro himself. In virtue of this right, therefore, which was still undisputed, he determined that his son, the Infant Don Sebastian, should remain in Brazil, as successor to the crown of that empire, and that his daughter, Donna Maria, should ascend the throne of Portugal.

The state of the public mind in Portugal, at the time of the King's death, rendered it absolutely necessary that a free government should be established. In these circumstances, Don Pedro, anxious to restore tranquillity to that long distracted country, issued a constitutional charter, and confirmed the regency appointed by his father, till the

constitution should be proclaimed. The charter was conveyed to Lisbon by the hands of the British ambassador, Sir Charles Stuart. In the following month, the new sovereign abdicated the crown in favour of his daughter, then in her sixth year; but as matters were still in an unsettled state, he refused to consider the abdication as valid, or to send his daughter to Portugal, until he should ascertain that the constitution had been sworn to, and until the espousals of the young Queen with her uncle, Don Miguel, had been solemnly celebrated, and the marriage concluded.

As soon as the commands of the Sovereign were received in Lisbon, immediate steps were taken by the Regency to put them in execution. The Constitution was proclaimed, the Regency reinstalled, the elections commenced, and at length the Cortes assembled at Lisbon on the 30th October 1826. On the 5th of that month, the Infant Don Miguel, took the oath at Vienna to the Constitutional charter, in the presence of the Portuguese Ambassador Extraordinary, Baron de Villa Seca; and on the 29th, on the arrival of a dispensation from Rome, the promise of marriage was celebrated between Don Miguel and Donna Maria the young Queen.

Though the right of Don Pedro to the throne of Portugal, had never been hitherto called in question, yet no sooner did he, in the exercise of his right, grant a free constitution, than the validity of his claims to the crown began to be denied. A party of considerable influence, aided and abetted by the influence of the Queen Mother, opposed the establishment of the Constitution. They ar-

gued, with considerable plausibility, that, as Emperor of Brazil, Don Pedro stood in regard to Portugal, in the situation of a foreigner, and he therefore lost all right to the throne of that kingdom; and that Don Miguel, as next in succession was the only legitimate heir of the Portuguese crown. Considerable bodies of troops under the influence, now rose in rebellion, both in the northern and southern frontier. The Spanish authorities, too, it was generally supposed, gave no slight encouragement to the rebels. It was therefore resolved by the Cortes to apply for assistance to England, the ancient ally of Portugal. The application was readily acceded to on the part of the British Government; and having obtained the concurrence of Parliament, they sent a body of troops to Portugal, with a view to extinguish the rebellion.

The rebels in the meantime, were making rapid advances in the north, and having conquered Beira, were marching in December towards Porto. Considerable alarm was felt at Lisbon, for the safety of the Constitution. All anxiety and fear, however, were dispelled on the publication of Mr Canning's Speech, delivered in the House of Commons, on the discussion of the affairs of Portugal. The noble sentiments conveyed in that oration, revived the minds of the Portuguese, and confirmed them in their adherence to the constitutional government. Almost as soon as the intelligence reached Lisbon, that they would receive the assistance of their allies, and only ten days after application had been made, British ships, to the great joy of the Constitutionalists, entered the Tagus with a large supply of troops. Despatches were

about the same time sent to the British Ambassador at Madrid, with orders to remonstrate with Ferdinand, on the protection and encouragement given to the Portuguese rebels, and to state, that unless the Portuguese charter was acknowledged, England would be compelled, however reluctantly, to commence hostilities against Spain. This ultimatum was supported by the French Government, which threatened to withdraw their troops from Spain, unless Ferdinand complied.

The Spanish monarch, perceiving that resistance to the wishes of both France and England was vain, at length reluctantly agreed so far to acknowledge the Portuguese charter, as to renew diplomatic relations with Lisbon. Had not the British and French Governments shown their decided disapproval of the conduct of Ferdinand, it is highly probable that, besides fostering, arming, and equipping traitors to their country, that infatuated and tyrannical monarch would have crushed liberty in Portugal, and, by the occupation of the country with a large army, would have subjected it to a military despotism.

The undisciplined state of the rebel army, exposed it to defeat, in almost every engagement with the Constitutionals. In the province of Alentejo, they were repelled with considerable loss by Count Villa Flor. The troops of the rebel chief, the Marquis de Chaves, pillaged Lamego, and advanced towards Viseu. Oporto appeared to be in considerable danger, but by the energy of the governor, General Stubbs, it was prevented from falling into the hands of the insurgents. As soon as the Governor of Seville understood, that *the Portuguese Royalists* were raising recruits in

Visen, he gave orders, in terms of the treaty concluded between Spain and Portugal, that they should be disarmed; but on hearing this, they quickly dispersed, and fled into Portugal.

The Cortes at Lisbon was prorogued on the 23d December; but, before the Session closed, a vote of thanks was passed, in the name of the Portuguese nation, to the British Sovereign, Cabinet, and people, for the prompt and efficient aid which had been afforded them.

Encouraged by the partial success he had already gained in the course of his negotiations, the British ambassador at Madrid now demanded that Ferdinand should disavow every thing done by the Spanish authorities, in favour of the Portuguese rebels, and also change his ministry. The Spanish monarch absolutely refused the latter demand; and, in answer to the former, he stated, that it was his intention to send 8000 men to the frontiers, with the view of disarming the insurgents who should attempt to take refuge in Spain. However well disposed Ferdinand might be, to yield in every point to the wishes of England and France, he was probably restrained by the influence of the violent or Apostolical party, whose abhorrence of liberal institutions is deep-rooted. The Spanish ambassador at Lisbon, Count de Casa Flor, had been suspended from his functions, in consequence of the support given by Spain to the rebel party. In a note of the 18th December, addressed to the British ambassador, it was stated, that Ferdinand would receive at Madrid, a public agent from Portugal, as soon as the Spanish envoy *was restored*. The diplomatic relations of the two

countries were now therefore renewed, and matters assumed a favourable appearance.

Towards the end of the year, the rebels met with a severe defeat at the Bridge of Amiran-te; they then crossed to the south of the Douro at Pez de Regoa, and went through Lamego south-east, towards Guarda and the Spanish frontiers. Small parties ravaged the wine districts of Upper Beira. At Valladolid the rebels were repulsed in several engagements, and driven towards the frontiers.

In the commencement of 1827, though the British minister still remained at Madrid, every thing seemed to indicate an approaching war. The Apostolical party called loudly upon Ferdinand not to yield to the desires of England; and, therefore, he remained inexorable in his determination not to recognise fully the Portuguese constitution. Apparently unawed by threats, or by the decisive step which had been taken by the British government, in sending troops into Portugal, he was actively preparing means of defence. Troops were marching in great numbers towards the frontiers, and a detachment was sent to the camp of San Roque to watch Gibraltar.

As the British troops had been landed in Portugal, principally for the purpose of defending it against foreign invasion, and no such emergency had yet occurred, they were chiefly employed in protecting the towns where British residents were situated. The constitutional generals, Villa Flor and Claudius, endeavoured to resist the progress of the rebels; but the activity and energy of the Marquis de Chaves enabled them firmly to main-

tain their ground. As soon, however, as the intelligence of the arrival of the British troops had reached the rebel army, a general consternation began to prevail, from which it never afterwards fully recovered.

Naturally jealous of the Spanish cordon, the Portuguese government put the province of Alentejo, on the right bank of the Guadiana, into a state of defence. The Spanish army chiefly occupied Badajos and Salamanca, the former as being the part of the Spanish frontier nearest to Lisbon; the latter, as affording an opportunity, in case of war, of joining the Royalist army at Beira. To obviate the suspicions of an invasion, which had arisen in the minds both of the British and Portuguese, Ferdinand published a manifesto disclaiming all intention of attacking Portugal. This proclamation, however, had not the desired effect. The fact, that instead of 8000 men, there were double that number extended along the frontiers of Portugal, was sufficient to convince the Portuguese that something more was intended than was professed. Their preparations for defence, therefore, were not in the slightest degree relaxed. The rebels, though still secretly aided by the Apostolical party in Spain, were so weakened by frequent desertions, that they were defeated in almost every engagement; and, in the beginning of the year, were compelled to retire from Visen.

The Session of the Cortes was opened at Lisbon on the 2d January, in the name of the Regent, by the Bishop of Visen, in a speech characterised by moderation and prudence. He very *wisely* called upon the Chambers to promote in *the nation* a spirit of union in opposing the ene-

mies of liberty: and never was such an advice more seasonable. So divided, indeed, was the opinion of the army, that Marshal Beresford, who was appointed Commander-in-chief, was in constant dread of a revolt in every detachment that was sent against the Royalists.

To show his displeasure at the obstinate conduct of Ferdinand, the King of France gave orders, for the immediate departure of the Swiss Body Guards from Madrid. That brigade, accordingly, left the city for France on the 11th January. A council of ministers, assembled on that day to prevent their departure, but in vain. This decided step, on the part of the French Government, displayed the absurdity of those rumours, which asserted it to be the secret intention of Charles to aid the Spaniards.

The Portuguese constitutionalists directed their forces chiefly towards Spanish Estremadura. Every thing seemed to bear a warlike appearance. Several English vessels steered their course towards Gibraltar. The rebels, meanwhile, were in a desperate condition. By the vigorous opposition of Generals Villa Flor and Claudius, the Marquis de Chaves was compelled to retreat. This he attempted to do, in a north-eastern direction, but without success. On the 9th January, they were again defeated in an engagement, and thrown back upon the Spanish frontier. This battle occurred at Coruches de Beira, a considerable distance to the north-west of the Mondego River. Consequences of considerable importance followed this victory. Almeida was re-occupied by the constitutionalists, and the rebels, completely discouraged, took refuge on the Spanish frontier on the

15th ; but General Villa Flor stopped on the limits of his own country. The rebel army were now almost completely reduced, and their operations were confined to the province of Trasmontes alone.

In Lisbon, the presence of the British troops awakened jealousy in the minds of some adherents of the Royalist party, in consequence of which, several soldiers were massacred in the streets. To prevent such occurrences, the Princess Regent issued a decree, giving positive instructions to the Intendant-general of Police for guarding against their repetition.

Towards the middle of January, the English ambassador complained to Ferdinand, that the Spanish authorities still persisted in assisting the rebels ; and that, on the 1st of the month, the Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo had delivered, to commissaries from the Marquis de Chaves, ten pieces of cannon, with their caissons and ammunition. In answer to this complaint, M. Salmeron, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, addressed a note to Mr Lamb, expressing the indignation of Ferdinand at the conduct of the Governor of Ciudad Rodrigo, in disobeying the orders sent him to disarm the Portuguese rebels who had escaped into the Spanish frontiers, and to send them forty leagues into the interior. The note also stated, that, in consequence of his negligence, he had been recalled, and was about to be tried by a council of war. The ambassador replied, that he had already made the English Government acquainted with the facts alluded to, and that he would send the note along with his first despatches.

The peace of Portugal was now almost com-

pletely secured. Few of the rebels yet remained ; and though a feeble attempt was made in the beginning of February to surprise Oporto, by the active vigilance of Count Villa Flor, they were prevented from accomplishing their purpose, and compelled to retreat. They still continued for a short time to make feeble efforts, but they were repulsed in an action which took place at the fortified bridges of Porto, Prado and Burcellos, and driven at the point of the bayonet towards Galicia. The pursuit continued all day, and 260 prisoners were taken, besides two pieces of cannon.

Though the speedy termination of the insurrection seemed every day to become more probable, the country was in a state of considerable danger from secret factions. It was therefore resolved in the Chamber of Peers, to present through the Regent, a respectful request to Don Pedro, that he would send to Portugal the young Queen Donna Maria II.; whose appearance they supposed, would draw round the throne all the members of the Portuguese family.

In the beginning of March, the rebels in *Tras-os-montes* were in considerable numbers. They meditated an attack upon Oporto, as the British army had not marched farther than Coimbra. Soon after, however, they were dispersed, and chased to the Spanish frontiers, where they were disarmed, and sent to a depot in the interior. The brigade of the British army, at Coimbra, then marched in separate divisions on the 5th ; one for Viseu, and the other for Leiria. This movement was, probably, intended to occupy such stations as would prevent any renewed attack on the part of the rebels. *Tras-os-montes* was now in a disturbed

state. A great part of the inhabitants had fled along with the rebels to the Spanish frontiers, and those who remained were in a very destitute condition.

The Spanish Government having got possession of the principal leaders of the rebel army, sent them under an escort to the French frontier. This step clearly intimated the pacific disposition of Ferdinand. As a still farther proof of his sincerity in adopting a less objectionable line of policy, he recalled his Ambassador at the Court of France, who happened to be friendly to the Apostolical party, and substituted in his room one of more moderate principles.

In the course of April, the public mind was thrown into a state of great anxiety, by the declining health of the Regent. The Royalist party, it was generally thought, would take advantage of the Regent's death, should it happen, to effect a counter-revolution. To prevent any such occurrence, therefore, a considerable part of the British army was stationed in and near Lisbon.

The conduct of Ferdinand now assumed a threatening appearance. Orders were issued for the augmentation of the Spanish troops on the frontier. In answer to the representations made to him on the subject, he replied, that it was occasioned by the advance of the English army to the Tagus, and the concentration of the Portuguese army near Visen.

Towards the end of the month, considerable alarm was excited by the revolt of a regiment garrisoned at Elvas. It was, at length, attacked and *dispersed by the rest of the troops, under the command of the governor*, but not without consi-

derable slaughter. As soon as the news reached the capital, troops were sent with all speed, under the command of General Villa Flor. Afraid that the example of the troops at Elvas might be followed by a portion of the people in Lisbon, the British troops were immediately concentrated towards the capital.

About this time, the Spanish troops were ordered to march nearer the Portuguese frontier. The British and Portuguese ambassadors remonstrated with Ferdinand, and, therefore, in accordance with their demands, he issued orders that the army should retrograde to the same distance from the frontier with the British and Portuguese troops.

In consequence of a disagreement having taken place among the Portuguese ministers, the cabinet was dissolved, and Saldanha, the Minister of War, was empowered, in the beginning of June, to form a new administration. Great dissatisfaction was expressed by the people with the new arrangements, and still more, when it was understood that the enlightened and popular statesman, the Marquis de Palmella, had refused the appointment of Minister for Foreign Affairs. The government of the Regency was every day becoming more unpopular; the spirit of desertion began to appear in the army, and, in the beginning of July, the Royalist party was evidently gaining ground.

Important diplomatic arrangements were, in the meantime, carrying on at Madrid. The English and French ambassadors announced to the Spanish government, that a treaty had been concluded between their several countries, which guaranteed *the Portuguese constitution*. In this treaty, which.

Ferdinand was called upon to sanction, Great Britain promised to evacuate Portugal, and France the south of Spain. A few troops, however, were still to remain in the vicinity of Lisbon, in case of any sudden attempt to seize the reins of government; and as an equivalent, Pampluna and Figueras were still to be garrisoned with French troops.

The faction of the Queen-mother, now entered into a scheme for placing Don Miguel at the head of the Government, with the title of Regent, as soon as he had completed his twenty-fifth year. This right they claimed in virtue of an article in the Constitutional Charter, which enacts, that during the minority of the sovereign, the regency shall belong to the nearest relative, according to the order of succession. But, besides that the conditions laid down by Don Pedro had not been fulfilled, an express provision of the charter precludes all kingly authority to the husband of the young Queen, until offspring shall arise out of the marriage. The claims of Miguel were powerfully supported by the Courts of Spain and Austria, and representations were made on the part of both these governments to induce Great Britain and France to favour the arrangement. Encouraged, probably, by the expected return of Don Miguel, a slight insurrection began to break out, in the beginning of July, in the north of the province Tras-os-montes. The insurgents were headed by Brigadier-general Ordaz. Considerable anxiety was felt in the capital as to the consequences of this movement.

The unpopularity of the Regency, rendered the party in favour of Don Miguel every day more

powerful. In the administration itself, this party chiefly prevailed, as was clearly shown by the removal of Saldanha from office, at the advice of Bastos, a well known enemy of the charter. The overthrow of the Constitution appeared to be fast approaching; and the Royalists confidently hoped that its death-blow would be finally struck by the arrival of Don Miguel in Portugal. The plan for giving him the Regency was now fully matured.

Towards the beginning of August, the Spanish army of observation approached nearer the frontiers, apparently to encourage the disaffected. The Portuguese capital still continued in a disturbed state; but all violent measures were prevented by the presence of the British troops in and around the town. The people were generally dissatisfied with the exclusion of Saldanha from the ministry; several councillors remonstrated with the Regent against it, but in vain. So averse, indeed, did her Royal Highness appear to the Constitutional party, that she dismissed General Stubbs, the gallant Governor of Oporto, and Sampaio, the military Governor of Estremadura, and to such a length were matters carried, that General Stubbs was ordered to be tried by a court-martial, for having requested, in a letter, that the Regent would restore Saldanha to the ministry. These harsh measures alienated the minds of the people still more from the Regent; and, had it not fortunately happened that General Stubbs was acquitted, it is impossible to say what disastrous consequences might have followed.

As soon as intelligence had reached Brazil, of the dangerous illness of the Princess Regent in

the earlier part of the summer, and of the alarming state of Portugal at that time, Don Pedro determined to invest his brother with the office of Regent ; and accordingly, he wrote him a letter to that effect. The Sovereign, however, was by no means certain, that, with this arrangement, the charter would be preserved. He, therefore, wrote to the English Government, requesting them to use their influence with the Infanta, that the chartered rights of the people might be kept entire.

Great preparations were now made at Lisbon for the reception of the new Regent, who was expected to arrive in the end of the year. Count Villa Real, the Portuguese ambassador to England, arrived at Vienna in the beginning of October. He was authorized by the Cortes, to make arrangements with Don Miguel, in regard to his return to Portugal ; but his Royal Highness stated, that he had no intention of setting out for Lisbon, till he received farther instructions from his brother. As complete arrangements, however, had been made with the English Government by Don Pedro, and as the full concurrence of the European powers had been gained, the new Regent left Vienna on the 29th November, for Paris, on his way to London. On his arrival in the English capital, his Royal Highness received the most polite attention from the Government. Before his departure for Lisbon, which took place towards the end of December, it was generally understood that he had received an assurance from the Ministry, that the British troops should be withdrawn from Portugal as soon as he arrived in that country.

What may be the result of the elevation of Don

ensions which for some time past have harassed the country, and unite the people in one common effort to support the constitutional principle on which their government is established, against the insidious attempts of Spanish influence from without, and internal dissensions from within.

In the distracted state of the country, literature has made little or no progress in Portugal. The Academy of Sciences holds its sittings at Lisbon, and though it ranks among its members men of high attainment in science, their labours have been almost wholly suspended by the political convulsions of the last few years.

EUROPE IN 1827.

VII.

GERMANY AND SWITZERLAND.

THE political state of Germany seems to have undergone little or no change, during the last year. The proceedings of the Diet at Frankfort, as far as we know of, them, have turned upon no extensive object or matter of general importance. No alteration has taken place in the constitutions of any of those countries of the confederation, which already enjoy this privilege; and those to which it was denied, still remain deprived of it. The convocation of the Prussian States, (Landstände), and their proceedings, may, however, be considered as a step towards accomplishing the objects of a representative constitution.

The death of the aged King of Saxony has made no change in the state of that country. He was a man by no means of eminent qualities or talents, but of great honesty, and much beloved by his subjects. Saxony is the only country in Germany, in which complete equality in civil privileges, is not extended to every denomination of Christians; and here, this exception seems to arise from the singular circumstance, that a country wholly Protestant, has a Catholic Sovereign. *When the* **Elector** of Saxony, in 1697, was

chosen to be King of Poland, he embraced the Catholic faith ; but provisions were made to prevent any farther encroachment upon the Protestant interest ; and those who belonged to the same Church with the Sovereign, were subjected to disabilities, which have not yet been removed. The present Sovereign, brother of the late King, is said to be more inclined to bigotry, or at least to proselytism, than his predecessor ; but the spirit of the country, and the perfect religious liberty which is insured to all classes in it, would make such an inclination of the King, though existing, altogether harmless.

The progress of literature and the arts, in Germany, during the last year, has, upon the whole, been satisfactory ; and we may record several efforts made by various governments, as well as by societies and private individuals, which afford pleasing evidence of a stirring and active spirit. Germany has been always distinguished among the States of Europe, by the diffusion of learning and information over the whole country, by the establishments formed for this purpose in numerous middle-sized and small towns, and the absence of a point of concentration, such as England, France, and other countries, possess in their capitals. No such metropolis, exercising a general sway over literature and the arts, could exist in Germany, which, for many centuries, has been subdivided into various States, the people and the governments of which, have been actuated by different, and often even by opposite interests ; and although such a division has been always considered as injurious to the country, as far as its

external political relations are concerned, it has, on the other hand, undoubtedly excited a spirit of independence and emulation, and consequently, a more general distribution of knowledge, even in the most remote parts of the country. From this remark, however, we must make an exception, with regard to those parts of Germany subjected to the Austrian dominion, where the progress of the mind is checked by censorship, prohibitions, and an exclusive attachment to one particular system of education.

There have been about twenty universities existing for many years in Germany, of which the greater part are in small towns. The cheapness of living in most of the towns, which are the seats of universities, or of the minor colleges, (Gymnasias), place the means of acquiring learning, within the reach of a far more numerous body of men, than can be the case in Great Britain. To these establishments are generally attached more or less extensive public libraries, which afford easy access, not only to the students, but to all those who are desirous of information.

Some of the Germanic States having, in later years acquired a greater political importance, it has been found advisable to institute in their capitals extensive seminaries for the cultivation of the sciences and arts; among these we may mention, first, the University of Berlin, founded in the year 1810, which may fairly be said to be at this moment, the most extensive scientific and literary establishment existing. To support this opinion, we *shall give here a brief account of the courses of lectures, which were delivered there, in the sum-*

mer session of last year; thirty-one courses on Divinity and the studies connected with it, as Biblical criticism, Church history, &c., by eleven Professors and Lecturers. Among the Professors we distinguish Schleiermacher, the able translator of Plato, and perhaps the most eloquent preacher in Germany, Dr Marheinecke, and Dr Neander, well known by his works on Church history. On Law, forty-seven courses of lectures were delivered by nineteen Professors and Lecturers, among whom we shall only mention Savigny, who enjoys a very high reputation on the Continent, on account of the profound learning he has displayed, in his works on the Roman Law. Thirty-two Professors and Lecturers delivered sixty-nine courses of lectures on Medical Science. Fifteen courses on Mental Philosophy were delivered by eight Professors. The most distinguished of these is Professor Hegel, who has placed himself at the head of a new school of philosophy in Germany. We observe, that even out of that country, his views begin to be understood by M. Cousin, who has in a recent edition of his works, paid him a high tribute of friendship and esteem. In Mathematical Science, Astronomy, &c. seventeen courses were given, by seven professors. In Physical Science, twenty-six courses, by fourteen professors and lecturers. In Political Science, thirteen courses, by seven professors. In History and Geography, thirteen courses, by six professors. Of these, Dr Ritter is well known by his geographical writings, and his lectures on that subject, attract the most popular audiences of any in the University. On *the History of the Fine Arts and Antiquities*, five courses of lectures, by two professors. On Phi

lology, twenty-seven courses, by seventeen professors.—These courses are attended by about 1400 students, none of whom, except foreigners, are received at the University, without having gone through their previous studies at a gymnasium, or, in case of private education, without having subjected themselves to an examination as to their classical, mathematical, and literary attainments.

The return to his native country of Alexander von Humboldt, who is not less distinguished by his liberal sentiments, than for his almost unrivalled scientific attainments, has been justly hailed, as an occurrence favourable to the interests of science. Without being placed in an official situation, he enjoys the confidence of the King of Prussia, and just hopes are entertained that his influence will insure a still greater share of attention to the intellectual progress of the country, on the part of the government. Humboldt has now undertaken to deliver, in the hall of the Royal Academy, public lectures on Physical Geography, which are listened to by a crowd of hearers of both sexes, and of all ranks, including the King and Royal Family.

A rival to the University at Berlin has arisen in an establishment of the same kind at Munich, a city, which bids fair to be as important to the south of Germany, as Berlin is to the north. The plan of the University was devised under the late King, but its organisation formed one of the first acts of the present King, Lewis I. The size and importance of the city, the previous existence of extensive establishments for the cultivation of *physical and medical science*, and a public library, *which is said to consist of 400,000 volumes*, afford *great advantages* to the new institution, and a still

greater in the liberal policy of the government, under whose protection it is placed, and which will undoubtedly insure its rapid progress. There are now at Munich, five professors of the various branches of Theology, (Catholic), twelve of Jurisprudence, seven of Political Economy, sixteen of Medicine, and thirty-six of the various other sciences; many eminent men are among the professors. The exertions of the liberal King of Bavaria, have not been confined to the University. Great attention is devoted to the general improvement of the schools, a measure which was begun so early as under the late King. The education of the clergy has always formed here, as well as in the other German States, a chief object of solicitude. Even in Austria, great reforms were effected during the last century, under the administration of Maria Theresa and Joseph II., and have been, to a certain extent at least, continued under the present government. In Bavaria, ecclesiastical instruction has been organized so as to enable the clergy to keep pace with the progress of the age, and to exert a truly beneficial influence on all classes of society.

The taste for the Fine Arts, in the present King of Bavaria heightened and cultivated by his long residence in Italy, when Crown Prince, contributed greatly to the embellishment of the capital. A number of churches (among which one is intended for Protestant worship) and public buildings are erecting; one of the most remarkable will be that commenced last year, under the name of *Pinacothèque*, and destined for the reception of pictures. The Bavarian Government, has long been in possession of a large collection of paintings,

which, during the political changes in the beginning of this century, has been much increased, partly by the removal to Munich, of the collection of Dusseldorf, so celebrated for the numerous works of Rubens which it contains, and partly by the evacuation of the various monasteries and convents in 1802, all whose treasures were accumulated into the public library and picture-gallery at Munich. From the whole of this collection, which consists of about 9000 pieces, a selection of the most interesting and instructive will now be made, and the new Pinacothèque will thus exhibit, in 1300 specimens, a very complete series of works of all the different schools. In paintings of Albert Durer, and other artists of the German and Flemish school, earlier than Durer, as Van Eyk, Martin Schoen, Schoreel, and Hemmling, it will afford a richer collection than exists in any other place.

The most recent and considerable addition made to the splendid gallery at Munich, has been the purchase of a collection formed by Messrs Boisséré, and placed for some time at Stuttgart; it consists of above 200 very valuable paintings, also belonging to the old German school. Lithographic impressions of these pictures are now in course of publication. We have happened to see several specimens of them, which appeared to us, in point of execution, superior to any production of this art we had hitherto witnessed.

Another magnificent building, under the name of *Glypthoteque*, is destined to receive the rich collection of ancient sculptures, which the King made when Crown Prince, and of which the well known *Egean marbles* form a part. The ceiling

of some of the apartments in this building is painted *in fresco*, under the direction of Cornelius, who is considered as the first German painter of the present day; and whom the King of Bavaria, immediately after his accession, created a knight, in consequence of seeing his fine works.

Upon the whole, the King of Bavaria has been very successful in gaining popularity, not only among his own people, but over all Germany, which the enthusiasm felt, among all classes of the community in this country for the cause of the Greeks, has given him an opportunity of procuring. The geographical situation of Bavaria, does not admit of any political connexion with the Greeks; but the King has attracted general approbation by the personal assistance he has given to them, in granting them pecuniary supplies, and in affording the officers of his army facilities in obtaining leave for *travelling* to Greece.

All classes also have been pleased with the visit which the King of Bavaria paid to Goethe, the oldest and greatest poet of Germany. Without any previous notice he appeared at Weimar, on the morning of Goethe's birth-day, among the crowd assembled in the house of the noble Bard, to offer him his good wishes, and the insignia of the Bavarian order of knighthood.

The venerable Goethe still retains that enthusiastic devotion to poetry and the fine arts, which characterized his youthful days. Though oppressed with the infirmities of age, he takes a lively interest in every literary novelty; and publishes at Stuttgard a periodical work, entitled, "Art and Antiquity," in which he gives his opinion on new *works in literature and the fine arts*.

The annual meetings of men cultivating the same arts and sciences, afford a powerful impulse to the general diffusion of knowledge. The first idea of such a society seems to have arisen in Switzerland, a country like Germany, divided into many small states, and where those meetings are well calculated to supply the absence of a general centre of civilization. Germany has followed the example of Switzerland, and a society of naturalists and physicians was instituted, for the laudable purpose of facilitating personal acquaintance among a class of professional men, who, from the distance of their respective places of residence, could otherwise be known to each other only by their scientific labours. Meetings are accordingly held, annually, alternately, in the south and in the north of Germany, to which all those who cultivate the physical and medical sciences are invited, and where, for several successive days, papers on subjects connected with these sciences are read. The four meetings held successively at Leipsig, Frankfort, Dresden, and Munich, have been numerously attended by men of science from all parts of Germany, except the Austrian States. The severer occupations of their assembly, are terminated by the higher pleasures of social intercourse. The members of the society have been kindly received by the local authorities; and not to mention the facilities granted to them for prosecuting the scientific objects of their meetings, they have had every reason to be satisfied with the hospitality of the King of Saxony, and Bavaria, and the late Mr Von Bethmann of Frankfort. At Munich, where the last meeting was held in September 1827, the whole com-

pany, consisting of 170 members, were, the day after the conclusion of their scientific labours, invited in the King's name, to a dinner in the Royal palace, at which the ministers and officers of the Court presided, and towards the close of which, the King himself appeared, to the great satisfaction of his guests.

Literature has been, we believe, as productive as usual in Germany during the last year. Among the works deserving particular notice we remark ; *Hammer's History of the Osman Empire*, a new edition of *Niebuhr's Roman History*, and a new edition of *Goethe's Works*, containing the last additions and corrections of the venerable author, (now in his 79th year) and which has at his request been placed by the United German Government, under a special protection against piracy. There are also new editions of Luther and Zuingli's works preparing.

The taste for translations from the English seems still to increase. Most of the productions of English literature, particularly novels, are translated with an astonishing quickness. A whole series of the latter, containing those of Sir Walter Scott, Cooper, &c. appear in numbers at a very low price.

The science of Medicine in Germany, has undergone a remarkable revolution within the last few years. A new sect has arisen, who, adhering to the system originally promulgated by Dr Hahnemann at Leipzig, have attained as much celebrity, not only in Germany, but over the whole continent as the followers of Broussais ever enjoyed. This theory, to which the name of Homeopathic

Medicine has been given, is founded on the following principle,—that all the diseases of the human body, provided they are simply internal, may be cured in the simplest and readiest way, by the artificial excitation of affections, which have the greatest possible resemblance with the existing disease. They give rise to these affections, by the employment of medicines which would occasion in a healthy individual, a disease analogous to that which it is desired to cure. By this process, the preexisting, is identified with the artificial disease; and as this last, ceases from the moment that the medicine which is the cause of it, has produced its effect, the real disease also terminates with it. But prudence is necessary in the employment of this mode of cure, to administer only a very small dose of the medicine employed, in order to produce only a moderate affection, and yet such, as shall be sufficient to transform the natural into an artificial disease.

This method of cure, fallacious as it must appear, has gained ground in different parts of Germany, has been so successful, that a journal has been established at Leipzig under the care of Dr Stegel, wholly appropriated to its illustration. The followers of the system are divided into two parties, the one of which, declares it to be the only medical system, while the other, considers it as applicable in a number of cases, but not in all. A theory such as that now referred to, could not fail to meet with powerful opponents, the most remarkable of whom are, Drs Jorg and Heinroth at Leipzig, and Wedekind at Darmstadt. In spite of all opposition however, *the system prevails to a great extent in Germany, and is now rapidly spreading in Italy and Russia.*

Germany has had to deplore the loss of several distinguished literary men and artists. The celebrated astronomer Bode, died at the end of 1826. He had been destined for commercial business, but his talents for mathematical science and astronomy introduced him to this career, in which he soon obtained eminence. He is the author of several esteemed works, and was the editor of the *Astronomical Ephemerides*, a periodical well known even out of Germany, and with which he was occupied till the last day of his life.

Göttingen lost one of its oldest and most celebrated professors, Dr E. G. Eichhorn, Knight of the Guelphic Order, author of some valuable works on history and Biblical criticism. He died in his 75th year, having been a public professor for thirty-nine years.

We have also to record the death of Ludwig van Beethoven, a composer, whose name has become familiar wherever music is cultivated. He outlived, by many years, his great rivals Haydn and Mozart. But the evening of his life was darkened by severe afflictions: a complete deafness not only deprived him of the pleasures of society, but rendered him unable to enjoy music, to which his life was wholly devoted: yet, strange as it may appear, he continued till the close of his life to compose musical works, in many of which, his genius still shines in its brightest forms; although it must be granted, that his imagination, unassisted by the evidence of his sense of hearing, has sometimes led him into regions, which are beyond the comprehension even of those, who are able to appreciate the productions of this art.

To this brief account of Germany, we shall add

a short notice on Switzerland, a country, of which the greater part is closely allied to Germany, by the use, *in writing* at least, of a common language, (for the spoken dialect in most of the Swiss cantons can scarcely be called German), and by the similarity of customs and manners. In a part of Switzerland, however, comprehending a district in which civilization has most rapidly advanced, the French language is made use of, and has brought along with it many French manners and customs.

The difference in degree of civilization, in all classes in the Swiss cantons, is extremely striking; and it is to be remarked, that in this respect, the balance is decidedly in favour of the Protestant population.

The political principles of the cantons forming the Swiss confederacy, are also very different, and sometimes almost opposed to one another. Geneva, the Canton de Vaud, Argovia, Appenzell, St Gall, and several others, are distinguished by the liberal sentiments of the majority of the population, whilst Berne and some others, where the aristocracy is powerful, are still adhering to superannuated prejudices and imbued with a profound veneration of power, under whatever shape it may appear.

In one liberal feeling however, all the Swiss cantons have united in the most praiseworthy manner,—in the efforts to assist the sacred cause of freedom in Greece. Mr Eynard of Geneva, after having distinguished himself by very generous donations out of his own fortune, (in one instance 50,000 francs), and by his great exertions in concerting and carrying into execution, various plans for the assistance of the oppressed Greeks,

has been placed at the head of all the Philhellenic committees formed in France, Germany and Switzerland, and he discharges the important duties of this office with the utmost zeal and discretion. In the smallest cantons of Switzerland, and among the most remote mountains, in districts almost entirely inhabited by poor herdsmen, the appeal for the cause of freedom has not been heard in vain, and sums have been collected, which are certainly large in proportion to the means of the givers.

The secrecy which is carefully preserved in all the operations of the Swiss Diet, prevents either their countrymen or foreigners from receiving information as to the statistics of the 22 cantons, unless from almanacks, annuals, or periodical works belonging to the different cantons. A work, however, has been recently undertaken by Professor Bernouilli, which will probably obviate this disadvantage. By concentrating all the information which can be obtained in regard to each canton, he expects, with the assistance of other learned men, to produce an interesting and valuable collection of documents relative to the statistics and general economy of Switzerland. This work, the first part of which appeared at Basle a few months ago, has excited high expectations, both on account of the learning of the Editor, and the utility of such a production, if ably conducted.

A great desire for improving the condition of the population, and for keeping pace with the age, is prominent in many of the Swiss cantons. Changes in the legislation, have been proposed and executed in several of them, during the last

year. In the Valais, the punishment of death has been abolished. The same measure has been proposed at Geneva. * Here, and in the neighbouring canton de Vaud, a new code of laws is preparing; and the introduction of trial by jury has been proposed and strongly recommended by Sismondi, Dumont, Laharpe, and other distinguished Liberals; but we regret to say, that the carrying into effect that measure, has in Geneva been postponed, and in Lausanne entirely rejected.

In almost every part of Switzerland, a very lively interest is manifested in organizing establishments for education; and it is only to be regretted that, of late years, the Jesuits have, in some of the Catholic cantons, gained great power, and have begun to exercise a dangerous sway over the schools. The well-known institution of M. de Fellenberg at Hofwyl continues in a flourishing state. Schools of arts have been established at Zurich, Berne, Aarau, and Geneva.

We have already stated, that the annual meetings for the advancement of science and art were first proposed in Switzerland, where the lovers of music and other sciences, have long been in the habit of assembling every year, in different towns, for the purpose of promoting their favourite pursuits.

Last year, a plan for the formation of an Agricultural Society upon a large scale was organized. It is to be connected with a society which already exists for the study of Natural History; and one of its great objects will be, the examination of the *best rural* implements, and the latest discoveries

* We understand that a similar proposal has lately been made in Bavaria.

and experiments in agriculture, with peculiar reference to their adoption in Switzerland. Corresponding Societies are to be established in every canton.

Without professing any positive political purpose or intention, these meetings are also useful to the Swiss confederacy in establishing a better understanding, and a more intimate connexion between the different cantons.

We are sorry to find in the Catholic cantons of the Swiss confederacy, fifty-nine monasteries, sixty-one nunneries, and seven hospitals for Capuchins !

The literature of Switzerland belongs partly to that of France, and partly to that of Germany. We will not, therefore, give here any particular notice of it. Sismondi, we understand, is continuing his *History of France* (published at Paris); but a considerable period has elapsed since the publication of his last volume. A literary and scientific periodical, the *Bibliothèque Universelle*, which is very extensively circulated, has been published for a series of years in Geneva, and continues to be conducted in an able manner.

Switzerland deplores the death of Baron de Staël, son of the celebrated Madame de Staël, whom, although his father was a foreigner, the Swiss are proud to number among their citizens. He united distinguished talents—which have also been appreciated in this country—with highly liberal feelings ; and great benevolence, aided by a very large fortune, had placed him at the head of a number of establishments of public utility ; so that his death is to be lamented as a general loss.

Henry Pestalozzi, who has devoted his whole

life to the advancement of education, and who, by his theoretical views as well as by his various practical plans, has exerted a great influence on public instruction on the Continent, died at Neu-hof near Brugg, on the 17th February 1827. He was born at Zurich on the 12th January 1745. Among his works, Lienhard and Gertrud, a kind of popular novel, has been translated into almost all languages.

EUROPE IN 1827.

VIII.

THE NETHERLANDS.

IN the end of the last century, the ancient Republic of Holland, so much celebrated in history, fell into the hands of the French Usurper. This event, though to a certain extent favourable to the commercial prosperity of the country, retarded its progress in all that was fitted to promote its internal improvement. But the union at length of the Belgic provinces with Holland, under the paternal reign of the present monarch, William I. has given an impulse to the kingdom of the Netherlands, which is urging it onward to equal, if not to surpass, the other European States in civilization and refinement.

The chief object which the King of the Netherlands appears to keep in view, is the adoption of such measures as shall promote the happiness of his subjects. Thus cherished by their Sovereign, the people are daily making rapid progress in intellectual and moral improvement. Commerce is prospering, agriculture is improving, the working of mines is carried on with ac-

tivity, and the different branches of the public revenue are in a flourishing condition.

It has been generally thought, that by the union of Belgium with Holland, and its separation from France, its commerce has been somewhat injured; but the bad effects which were apparent some years ago, are passing away, and commerce is prospering. Free Trade is encouraged by the Government to a considerable extent, the importation of foreign merchandize being permitted, on payment of a trifling duty. It cannot be denied, that from the prejudices and vanity of the people, as well as their attachment to old customs, the consumption of foreign manufactures is too much encouraged, to the neglect of home-productions. As a necessary consequence, Dutch commerce may still be said to be in a state of inactivity; but the manufacturers are beginning to resume their wonted energy, trading with those countries from which they are not excluded by prohibitory duties. The King proposed, in 1826, to the Second Chamber of the States-General, a project of a law in regard to the duties on imports and exports. This proposal has excited great interest in the country; and a conflict has ensued between the agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial provinces, on the subject. It is earnestly to be hoped, that the liberal designs of the enlightened Sovereign, will not be frustrated by the prejudices and narrow-minded selfishness, of any class of his subjects. Commerce has been for some time retarded by the unwillingness of the King, to accede to the regulations of the Congress of Vienna, in regard to the navigation of the

Rhine. The first article of these regulations, passed in 1815, runs thus:—"The navigation in the whole course of the Rhine, from the point where it becomes navigable, to the sea, both in descending and returning, shall be entirely free." This decree does not compel the Government of the Low Countries to permit the passage of German ships through their territory, on the same conditions with Belgic vessels, but the sole intention of the contracting parties was to procure the abolition of the oppressive duties demanded at Mayence, Cologne, &c. The commission established for this purpose by the Congress, found it difficult to satisfy the States of Prussia and the Low Countries, as to the propriety of the decree. A correspondence on the subject took place between the Governments of Austria and the Low Countries. At length, by decree of the 10th of September 1826, the King of the Netherlands removed all the obnoxious restrictions as far as regarded his territory; and is to be hoped that the other States on the banks of the Rhine, will soon imitate his example.

Still farther to promote the commercial prosperity of his kingdom, this Sovereign has recently concluded a treaty of commerce and navigation with the United States of Mexico, which secures to the commerce of the Netherlands, the advantages granted to the most favoured nation. He has also, during last year, effected an agreement with the King of Sweden and Norway, providing for the temporary removal of the barrier which prevented the vessels belonging to the Low Countries from bringing into the ports of Sweden any other products than those of their country.

The population of the Kingdom of the Nether-

lands, amounting at present to about six millions, is on the increase, and yet, by a judicious administration, pauperism and crime are daily diminishing. In Belgium there are seven hospitals for the poor established at Mons, Hoogstraeten, Namur, la Cambra near Brussels, Bruges, Hoorn, and Reckheim. The first was formed at Bruges by M. Chauvelin in 1805. Prison discipline has also begun to engage the attention of the public; and the Society in Amsterdam for the Improvement of the Condition of Prisoners, continues, by means of its different provincial or local commissions, to collect information on the subject. It is a very encouraging fact, that this excellent institution has received the countenance of his Majesty; and it is not improbable, that at the suggestion of the Society, separate prisons will be erected for the reception of juvenile delinquents, where, by a process of moral training, they may be rendered useful and honourable members of society.

: In almost every part of the Netherlands agricultural pursuits are prosecuted with the utmost industry and activity, although, from their peculiar situation, the lands are exposed to the ever-threatening inroads of the sea. A great boon has been bestowed in the last year upon the people, by a more equitable division on the part of government of the land-tax, which has been considered as oppressive in some quarters, and comparatively light in others. The extension of land and water communication, which is pursued with activity and zeal, will no doubt be productive of most beneficial consequences to the kingdom. A measure *which strikingly displays the wisdom of the government*, may be observed in the modifications

which have been introduced into the system of lotteries, with a view to their ultimate abolition.

The King of the Netherlands, in behalf of his Catholic subjects, has at length concluded an agreement with the Pope ; but the stipulations are accompanied with certain reservations, securing the laws of the State, and the respect due to liberty of conscience in matters of religion.

Great improvements have of late been effected in the administration of justice, by the division of the country into circuits, and by the new system of legislation, which will soon be brought into operation. The French codes of legislation have hitherto, with some modifications, been uniformly employed in the Low Countries ; but new codes of law, have been drawn up by order of Government, founded however, principally, on the French system. The new Civil and Commercial Codes, were approved by the States-General in the Session of 1825-26 ; the Code of Judicial Organization was discussed and adopted in 1826-27, and the project of a Penal Code was submitted last October ; but, whether it was approved or not, we have not been able to ascertain. As some time must elapse before these new arrangements will be completed, some modifications in the French laws, have in the meantime been adopted. The Civil and Commercial Codes are said to be peculiarly valuable ; but the same eulogium cannot be passed on the Criminal Code. Many alterations of the French laws have been made in the new system, which, instead of being entitled to the name of improvements, resemble the institutions of the dark ages ; and punishments have been introduced, which can

have no other tendency than to degrade and insult the moral feelings of mankind.

The progress of education in the Low Countries, is still more rapid than in any of the other Continental States, not excepting even France. If Pestalozzi in Switzerland, and M. Ordinaire in France, have endeavoured to improve the system of instruction, by the introduction of processes more suited to the natural progress of the human mind ; no less indefatigable have been the exertions of M. Jacotot in Belgium to extend his system, which is somewhat analogous to that of Pestalozzi, and is termed *universal instruction*. This plan, though much opposed by some learned men, has been remarkably successful, and has met with liberal encouragement from Government.

Much attention was formerly drawn to the subject of education in France, by the *Emile* of Rousseau ; but, by his extravagant paradoxes, that celebrated writer injured the cause which he meant to advocate. The common end kept in view by the Swiss, French and Belgian philanthropists, in the improvements which they have recently proposed, is to encourage, as early as possible, activity of thought. With a view to promote the improvement of his people, the King of the Netherlands engaged Professor Kinker of Liege, to point out the best mode of applying the system to the different parts of public instruction ; and, accordingly, in his Report, the learned Professor recommended the formation of a Central Institute which, besides being used as a school for the education of children, might be employed *for the purpose* of training masters for the various

district schools. Out of the whole population of the Low Countries, 633,859 children and youths receive education in all kinds of schools. Societies, for the encouragement of instruction among the lower classes, have been formed at Liege and Namur, under the superintendence of the most influential men in the country. Mechanics schools have spread with the same rapidity as in France; and the King has established in all the University towns, professorships for gratuitous instruction in the principles of Mechanical Philosophy, as applied to the Arts. This mark of the paternal care of Government, is duly appreciated by the public; and, accordingly, the Lecture Rooms are crowded. The interest excited in favour of popular education, has led to the publication of many useful works on the elementary principles of the sciences.

In addition to the measures taken to propagate primary instruction in the towns and villages, the King has recently granted ten pensions of 300 florins each, and ten of 150, to be dedicated to the education of that number of females, with a view to their being employed as instructresses. Before any female can enjoy this privilege, she must engage to follow the profession of a schoolmistress, and undergo an examination as to her knowledge of the French and Dutch languages, grammatical analysis and logic, and the elements of calculation.

The institutions for public instruction in the Low Countries, are daily receiving an extension appropriated to the wants of the people, and the progress of science. All suitable means are resorted to by Government for the encouragement

of literature and the fine arts ; and the liberty of the press is fully maintained.

In the kingdom of the Low Countries, no fewer than six Universities exist, under the protection and countenance of the Government. The College of Louvain has been celebrated for several centuries, and deserves particularly to be mentioned, on account of the improvements which have been recently introduced at the desire of his Majesty. Several professorships have been endowed in it, which the Universities of other countries would do well to imitate. Among these may be mentioned, the Lectures on the National History and the Statistics of the Low Countries, delivered by Professor Wisscher ; on the Political History of Europe, by Professor Dumbeck ; and on the General Theory of Statistics, and the Comparison of the Political Constitutions of the Low Countries, France, Germany, and England, by Professor Moné. Few universities on the Continent have sent forth more learned men than that of Leyden. The other Colleges are established at Liege, Ghent, Utrecht and Groningen, all of which are under the superintendence of able and learned professors. In the last mentioned college, which has long been celebrated for the information which it affords on Hebrew Antiquities and Oriental Literature, a professorship has been recently endowed, for giving instruction on the diplomatic history of the European nations.

In the northern provinces of the kingdom, three Athenæums, or superior Colleges, are established, which, however, differ completely from the institutions bearing that name in the southern provinces. The Dutch Athenæums of Amsterdam,

Franker and Deventer, resemble universities in all respects, but they have no power to confer degrees. The Athenæums in the South, with the exception of that at Brussels, are similar to the *Gymnasia*, or Latin schools of Holland.

The principal scientific institution of the Low Countries, is the *Royal Institute*, founded by Louis Buonaparté, a short time after the erection of the United Provinces into the kingdom of Holland. After the abdication of Louis, it was still preserved by Napoleon; and, on the elevation of the present King to the throne, he took a peculiar interest in its success. This valuable institution, which holds its sittings at Amsterdam, is divided into four sections, each including from thirty to forty members. In their investigations, the first is limited to the exact sciences; the second to the national language, literature and history; the third to the learned languages, philosophy, antiquities, and general history; and the fourth to the fine arts. Each of these sections holds a public meeting every two years, at which prizes are distributed, and a report of their labours read.

The *Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles-Lettres* at Brussels ranks next to the Institute. It was originally founded in 1767, by Count Cobentzel; but, in consequence of political events, its labours were suspended in 1794, and it was not until the accession of the present enlightened monarch that its sittings were resumed. The objects of its inquiries are the exact sciences, the belles-lettres, and national history.

The *Society of Sciences at Harlem*, which, like the former, proposes subjects for prizes, and pub-

lishes memoirs, is the oldest of the learned societies in the Northern provinces. Though, by the original plan, the field of its inquiries is very extended, its memoirs are chiefly on scientific subjects, particularly physics, chemistry, and political economy. It possesses a Museum of considerable extent. There are several societies in Holland on the same plan; but the most remarkable are the *Society of Dutch Literature* at Leyden; the *Zealand Society of Sciences* at Middleburg; and the *Provincial Society of Sciences and Arts* at Utrecht. The King has accepted the title of *Protector* of these four associations, which are consequently recognised by Government.

It is impossible, in enumerating the Literary and Scientific Institutions of the Low Countries, to omit the *Dutch Society of the Fine Arts and the Sciences*, which, though not patronised by Government, deserves peculiar notice. Its labours are almost solely confined to Dutch literature. It has four branches at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Leyden, and the Hague. The most distinguished literary men are members of this association.

At the head of the Philanthropic Institutions stands the *Society of Public Utility*, founded in 1787. To such celebrity has this association attained, that it reckons at present 170 sections in the kingdom, and two in the West Indies. The design of the society is to diffuse sound ideas of religion and morality, by propagating religious and civil toleration, and diffusing useful knowledge among the poor, and especially among the children and young people of both sexes. For this purpose *it publishes* useful works, which are sold at a very *low price*, so as to be within the reach of the low-

est classes of society. It has for some time established Savings Banks, which will probably tend greatly to improve the habits of the working classes. To the same society is due, the progressive amelioration of the system of public instruction in the Low Countries. It has last year appointed a commission, with power to form a school for mechanics on a similar plan with those of France and England. Several institutions on an inferior scale, and supported by private subscriptions, are established throughout the kingdom, which direct their attention to particular departments of the sciences, literature, and the fine arts. Associations of this nature have been formed at Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Harlem, Hoorn, Groningen, Bruges, Brussels, and the Hague.

The kingdom of the Low Countries can boast of having produced more eminent painters than any other country in Europe. Though the art is now more generally diffused, the people still feel an honest pride, in pointing to the works of the ancient Dutch and Flemish artists, which adorn the picture galleries at Amsterdam, Antwerp, the Hague, and Brussels. The King has lately founded two academies of the Fine Arts, the one at Amsterdam, the other at Antwerp. Public exhibitions of paintings take place every year, by turns, at the Hague or at Amsterdam, and at Ghent, at Antwerp, or at Brussels. In the latter town, there is a society for the encouragement of the Fine Arts, and a school for painting, architecture, and sculpture, under the name of an academy. Leyden possesses a superb cabinet of Natural History, under the direction of M. Temminck. Utrecht can boast of the *beautiful collection* of Professor Bleuland, and

the Hague of a royal library, and a collection of national antiquities.

For the encouragement of the progress of music, the King has lately founded four royal establishments for instrumental and vocal music at Amsterdam, Brussels, the Hague, and Liege. These establishments are maintained at the expense of Government and the towns where they are situated.

In Holland theatrical amusements have never been encouraged to the same extent as in other countries. For two centuries, however, a theatre, has been supported in Amsterdam at the expense of the town, and several Dutch pieces of some merit are represented with considerable success. The South of Holland has likewise a theatre, where only prose pieces translated from the German are represented ; but no theatre has yet been established where the national language is used. The French theatre at Brussels enjoys the protection of the King, as well as the other theatres, but it is also conducted partly at the Royal expense.

Such is the activity, the intelligence, and the progressive improvement of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, that they are entitled to be ranked among the most industrious and civilized nations. Under the wise government of a monarch, whose sole desire it is to act as the father of his people, the administration, industry, commerce, legislation, and education are advancing with equal rapidity, and the people appear to second with their efforts and support with their confidence, the men who are placed at the head of the state ; in such circumstances, we may well consider the nation as happy, and indulge the hope of a still happier futurity.

EUROPE IN 1827.

IX.

ITALY.

In their political condition, the Italian States are almost entirely regulated by the decisions of the Austrian Cabinet. Every improvement which, under the French supremacy, had been introduced in the different provinces, has been rooted out under the Austrian *regime*, and the restored princes are compelled to submit, in every point, to the will of the Court at Vienna. Since the last attempt which the Italians made to recover their liberty, they have been subjected to a more cruel military despotism, and a political inquisition has been established at Milan, equal in severity to that at Mayence. But even under Austrian tyranny, considerable exertions are making, especially in the north, to promote the progress of literature and science. There can be little doubt, that the influence of these efforts will soon be displayed, in the improvement of the manners, opinions, and general habits of the people. Notwithstanding *the unfavourable circumstances in which the Italian*

Peninsula is placed, considerable energy is displayed in the prosecution of literature. In every part of the country may be perceived a spirit of literary excitement, but it is developed in each of the States, with an intensity proportioned to the encouragement received from the local government.

Savoy, from its geographical position, has a favourable opportunity of participating in the progress of the sciences and arts, in the other European nations. At Chambery, a society has been recently formed, bearing the name of the Academy of Sciences, which has occupied itself since its formation in very interesting researches, on the physical geography of the province of Savoy. This institution has received, last year, a donation from Count Boigne, who, with well directed benevolence, has also founded at his own expense, an hospital for the insane.

Tuscany, and especially Florence, its capital, feels too much reverence for its illustrious ancestors, Dante, Machiavel, and Galileo, to neglect their lessons and example. It cultivates the sciences, literature and the arts, with equal enthusiasm and success. In no other part of Italy, is popular instruction more generally diffused. In Florence, there are four schools of mutual instruction, supported by the munificence of private individuals; three elementary schools following the old method, which are maintained at the public expense, and a great number of institutions conducted by private teachers. Classical instruction is given in two public schools, under the superintendence of *monks*; but the course of studies pursued in these *classical seminaries* is very defective. An esta-

ishment for the gratuitous instruction of mechanics has been for some time in operation, but its labours have been followed with little success.

Several seminaries for female education exist in Florence. The Grand Duke Leopold I., whose memory is still cherished in Tuscany, founded central schools for the elementary instruction of females. There are four seminaries of this kind in the town, but the old method of teaching is unfortunately still adhered to in them. These schools depend for their support on fixed revenues, and accordingly instruction is given gratuitously. Six establishments for the education of the higher classes, have been opened in Florence. One of them has been recently founded on the best principles, and under the protection of her Royal Highness, the reigning Grand Dutchess. In consequence of the excellent organization of this new seminary, decided improvements have been introduced into the institutions of the same kind, which have existed for some time. Four public libraries, and several reading-rooms, furnish ample means of instruction to all classes of society, and give them an opportunity of acquiring an early knowledge, of all that is interesting in the literary and political world.

Two Journals are published at Florence. The *Antologia*, a literary and scientific Journal, is the best periodical publication in Italy. A Journal of Agriculture appeared last year; and on the publication of the second number, it reckoned more than 600 subscribers in Tuscany alone—a circumstance which strikingly shows, to what an extent the desire of knowledge is diffused among the people. In further proof of this remark, it is satisfactory

to state, that the number of printing establishments has been doubled at Florence in six years.

The University of Pisa, the Academy della Crusca, and that of the Georgo-Phili at Florence ; the Journal of Literature at Pisa, and particularly the *Antologia*, have contributed much to the progress of knowledge in Italy. A society for Statistics has been recently formed, which also promises to be of great utility.

In Tuscany, the Fine Arts meet with ample encouragement, and literary enterprises are conducted on a great scale. Were it necessary to adduce facts in illustration of this, it might be sufficient to notice the beautiful edition of the History of Sculpture, by M. Cicognara, and that of the work of M. D'Agincourt, undertaken with the same success, and by the same editor, M. Giachetti of Prato ; the publication of the grand work of Mascagni upon Anatomy, and many other valuable productions.

In Lombardy, the Physical and Mathematical Sciences are still prosecuted with ardour. The Muses, too, have become naturalized in the province, since Monti established his residence in that quarter. The Academy of the Fine Arts at Brera, is always worthy of the public regard, both from the talents of its directors and the merits of its pupils. In Lombardy, and particularly at Milan, a greater number of works are published than in any other part of Italy. M. Gioja still continues to produce new works on statistics and philosophy ; and M. Romagnosi on civil and criminal law. The Typographic Society, for the publication of *the Italian classics*, is reprinting the most remarkable books of every kind which Italy produced

in the course of the last century. They have already given to the public the works of Beccaria, Verni, Filangieri, Giannino and others.

Several popular works, both national and foreign, have been published by M. Silvestri, with a view to convey information to the lower orders. Schools of mutual instruction are prohibited by the local government of the State; but it maintains a few central institutions, conducted, however, in a style feeble and inefficient. The Military College of Milan, is a seminary of singular utility; and its excellent organization, under the direction of Colonel Young, might serve as a model for similar institutions in other countries.

The number of Journals, purely literary and scientific, which are published at Milan alone, is very considerable. We remark for Literature, the Sciences and Arts, the *Biblioteca Italiana*, and the *Collector*, in imitation of the Spectator; for the Medical Sciences, the *Universal Annals of Medicine*, by Dr Omodei, the *Critical Journal*, by Dr Strambio, that of *Chemical Pharmacy*, by M. Cattaneo. Besides these, may be mentioned the *Universal Annals of Statistics, Travels, &c.* the *Ephemerides* for Astronomy, the Annals of Technology, Agriculture, and the Arts.

The towns of the Lombard-Venetian State are making considerable progress in various departments of knowledge. Brescia and Trevisa profit much by their Athenæums, as the *Acts* of the *Athenæum* of Brescia, and the *Journal* published by that of Trevisa, sufficiently attest. Verona possesses an Academy of Agriculture, which prosecutes its labours with considerable success. Pavia

and Padua, although they lament the loss of several celebrated professors, may still boast of crowded lecture-rooms and great literary enterprises. It is impossible to speak without admiration, of the splendid edition of the classic metaphysicians of all nations, conducted at Pavia by M. Sacchi, who is also assisted in his labours by several distinguished pupils of the University. Italy is also indebted to several Professors in Pavia, for a good *Journal of Physics, Chemistry and Natural History*; and to the University of Padua, for a *Journal of Italian Literature*, conducted with great ability. The College of Pavia, has lost recently the celebrated Volta, whose name is entitled to a high rank among the discoverers in Physical Science. Great regret was also felt in the same University at the death of Tamburini, which happened a few months ago, in his 90th year. This distinguished professor, after filling for eighteen years the Chair of Theology, was transferred to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy and Jurisprudence, the duties of which he discharged, for a long period, with great honour both to himself and to the College. In speaking of Pavia, the mind naturally reverts to Foscolo, whose recent death Italian Literature has much cause to deplore. At one period of his life, he succeeded the celebrated Monti in the Professorship of Belles Lettres, at the University of Pavia; and though by no means an erudite scholar, the elegance and beauty of his lectures attracted audiences, equal in point of numbers to those of his far-famed predecessor.

In Venice, the literary spirit appears to be rapidly declining; and although a branch of the *Institute of Italy* is established there (the other

two having their seat at Milan and Padua), science is making little or no progress. The fine arts are cultivated in an academy, under the enlightened direction of Count Cicognara. Venice is the residence of several distinguished literary characters, as M. Gamba, Madame Albrizzi; but instead of those valuable editions of works for which it was once celebrated, its literary undertakings are almost solely confined, to the translation and publication of a few extracts from the French Journals.

Genoa has no longer an existence peculiar to itself, but it contributes to the literary glory of Piedmont, of which it has become a province. The only remarkable advantage which it enjoys, is from the Astronomical Observatory established by Baron Zach. We may also mention the Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, under the able and successful management of M. Bagutti.

The sciences and useful arts are prosecuted with ardour in Turin, and literature is also making efforts, to preserve the reputation it has acquired from the celebrated Alfieri. If in tragedy he has hitherto found no equal in that city, M. Nota will probably obtain the same success in comic poetry. He is regarded by many as the best comic poet of Italy, since the days of Goldoni. Literature and the fine arts are at present more encouraged in the Duchy of Parma, than that of Modena. This last, however, is not destitute of literary men; it possesses also the *Italian Academy*, which, however, does not venture to take an active part in the propagation of knowledge.

The States of the Church, and especially their

capital, appear destined only to promote Philological studies, and those of Antiquities and the Fine Arts. We remark the *Roman Memoirs of Antiquities and the Fine Arts*, edited by MM. L. Cardinali, Melchiori Visconti, and C. Cardinali. The *Arcadian Journal* is consecrated particularly to literature and poetry, and it also devotes considerable attention to the Medical Sciences. Astronomy is cultivated with great success. The *Opuscula Astronomica*, published sometime ago by MM. Calandrelli, Conti, and Ricchebach, are very valuable. It must be considered as a fact of no small interest and importance, that the Elements of Optics and Astronomy, by M. Setele, where the truth of the Copernican System is demonstrated, has been adopted as a Text-book in the principal Gymnasium at Rome. Considerable efforts have been made to revive the celebrated *Accademia dei Lincei*; but very little can be expected from the new Academicians, in a place where they are not permitted publicly to honour the memory of their ancient founder, Prince Cesi.

The political doctrines taught in the States of the Church, are perverted and illiberal. M. Fea has attempted to revive, the obsolete and absurd notions, in regard to the direct and indirect temporal supremacy of the Pope. It is asserted, that in a seminary for ecclesiastical law, which has been recently established at Rome, the professor, a lawyer of the order of Theatins, uses all his efforts to persuade his pupils, that all legitimate power is derived from the Pope—a doctrine which Gravina ably refuted in the same town, in the earlier part of last century.

Of all the towns in the States of the Church,

gna is least affected by the influence of the Neapolitan spirit, and the sciences and literature are held in honour. A Medical Journal is published, which devotes its pages to the illustration of the medical doctrines of M. Rasori. The works of Orioli, Mondini and others, contribute much to the progress of the physical sciences. Bologna has never neglected the interests of literature and poetry.

Several works on Medicine, Mathematics, and Mineralogy, especially on the productions of Vesuvius, prove that the sciences are cultivated by the Neapolitans. Although various literary societies are in operation, they have produced nothing of any importance.

The same observations might be made in regard to Sicily, as the number of authors and their productions, are less numerous than in any of the Italian States. The works of Scina and Ferari, and the different pieces of M. Fodera, show the high character of Sicilian Literature.

Music and Poetry have long been the favourite objects of admiration in Italy; and they are still cultivated with the greatest enthusiasm. The dispute between the romantic and classical poets is carried on with remarkable keenness. The journals are divided in their opinions, as to the two classes; the *Antologia* of Florence advocating the cause of the romantic, while the *Giornale Arcadica* adopts the sentiments of the classical poets.

EUROPE IN 1827.

X.

GREECE.

THE struggles of the Greeks have, from the commencement of the war, awakened thoughts and feelings of no ordinary interest in every generous and philanthropic breast. Nearly seven years have elapsed, since that people first began to resist the authority of their Turkish oppressors, and to display in the eyes of Europe, an intrepidity and undaunted courage, worthy of the better days of ancient Greece. From that time the ferocious Mahmoud, aided by his active and more intelligent tributary the Pacha of Egypt, was incessantly pouring in herdes of ruthless barbarians to massacre the unfortunate Greeks, while the European Governments, whom humanity, interest, and religion should have roused, were spectators of the disgraceful scene.

In the opening of the seventh campaign in 1827, *the state of Greece was extremely critical. Missolonghi, their western capital, had been levelled*

with the dust; the houses in the surrounding country, had been pillaged and destroyed, and the woods were the only refuge of the wretched inhabitants; the fate of Missolonghi seemed now to be impending over Athens; the enemy were in possession of the fertile plains of the Morea, and threatened to occupy the islands. In these circumstances, the Greeks were completely discouraged; their cause appeared to be hopeless, and was rendered still more so, by their internal dissensions. Two legislative assemblies at Astros and Egina, were reproaching each other; opposing factions prevailed through the country; suspicion, jealousy, and want of confidence, beset the minds of both soldiers and chiefs.

The war in the course of 1826, had assumed an aspect so alarming as to threaten the complete extermination of the unhappy Greeks. The savage Arabs plundered and burnt, almost every village in the Morea, and chased the inhabitants into the mountains; the Greek soldiers were discontented from want of pay and provisions; the people were worn out by the sufferings of a six years' war; and the country appeared an easy prey to the relentless Turks. Griziotti, at the head of 1000 soldiers, had been blockaded in the Acropolis of Athens from the 30th of June, by Kurschid Pacha, who commanded 15,000 Turks in Eastern Greece. The brave and generous Fabvier having heard that the besieged were in want of powder, had the courage to force his way to them on the 1st of December, accompanied by 50 Philhellene officers and 500 soldiers, having their knapsacks filled with powder. Though this gallant band *accomplished their purpose*, they could never

succeed in escaping from the citadel, but were doomed to endure the rigour of a severe winter, and the horrible privations of a protracted siege.

In the early part of the past year, though the capital of Eastern Greece was still besieged, the hopes of the Greeks were somewhat revived by the intelligence that Lord Cochrane, who had been so long and so anxiously expected, was on his way to assist them. The powerful and effective aid, which this brave Admiral had afforded to the South Americans, in their glorious struggle for independence, had so raised his fame, that the highest expectations were entertained from his pre-eminent skill in naval affairs.

About the same time, England, France, and Russia agreed to treat with the Turkish Government in behalf of the unfortunate Greeks. Previous however, to the combination of the three powers, the Russian Emperor Nicholas commissioned his Charge d'Affairs at Constantinople, to present to the Porte an energetic remonstrance, against continuing the war with his Christian subjects. This step evidently showed, that the Russian Emperor, much to his honour, was anxious to put an end to hostilities in the Morea, and to obtain security in future for the oppressed Christians. Upon the refusal of the Porte to accept the mediation of Russia, the ambassador was sent from St Petersburg to Constantinople, with express orders to join the French and English ambassadors, in one combined effort in behalf of the Greeks. The propriety of interference in the internal affairs of any country, is at best a doubtful question; but *this is one of those extreme cases in which the ex-*

cases of the Government have been so great, as not only to warrant the interference of foreign powers, but to render neutrality highly criminal ; for, in wishing to extirpate the religion and race of the Greeks, this cruel tyrant proclaimed war not against them alone, but against Christianity and the human race.

It was on the 18th of March, that the minds of the Greeks were cheered by the arrival of Lord Cochrane in the port of Nauplias. No sooner was the joyful news announced in the town, than thousands rushed to the shore, to welcome the long-expected deliverer of Greece. The ardent enthusiasm of this brave people, deeply affected the heart of the gallant Admiral, as he entered the town, amid loud acclamations. Garlands of flowers showered upon his head as he passed along ; and every eye seemed to beam with the confident hope that the independence of Greece would now be secured. Immediately on his arrival, Lord Cochrane was invested with the supreme command of the naval forces of Greece. Anxious to unite their divided councils, and to impart energy to their efforts in the cause of liberty, he issued a proclamation, urging them to unanimity and vigorous action. Not contented, however, with mere declarations, Lord Cochrane commenced his career by a splendid exploit, which roused the hopes and expectations of the Greeks. Having entered Navarin, the finest port in the Morea, he captured four Turkish vessels, and afterwards a Turkish ship, laden with provisions for Ibrahim Pacha.

The affairs of the Greeks, which, in the com-

ed from Modon, by way of Navarin, to the 'ancient Elis. At his approach, the inhabitants fled into the mountains, or took refuge in some fortified convents. Several hundreds of them, with their wives and children, threw themselves into the Castel Tornese, a little fortress, determined to defend it to the last extremity. They were compelled, however, to surrender, and exposed to the cruel barbarities of their savage conquerors.

The sanguine expectations of the Greeks, in regard to Athens, were soon disappointed. Redschid Pacha having received a reinforcement from Constantinople, surrounded the Greek army, and cut off the flower of them, to the amount of two thousand men. In this engagement, General Church was wounded. On the 4th May, two days before, the Greeks received a severe check, in which they lost the brave Karaiskaki. The Acropolis still remained in their hands; but it had been so heavily bombarded by Redschid, that it was not expected to hold out any time. The Greeks were now in a state of great consternation. The Seraskier taking advantage of this general alarm, proposed terms of capitulation, through a French officer, to the Greek garrison in the Acropolis. His terms, however, were indignantly refused; but the language in which the refusal was couched, was in every respect worthy of the heroism of the Greeks.

“ We thank you for the trouble which you have taken on our account. The capitulation proposed by the Seraskier, and offered to us through you, *speaks of subjects of the Porte*. There are none *here*. We are Greeks, resolved to live free, or

die. If the Seraskier desires to have our arms, he has only to come and take them by force. We have the honour to salute you.—The Acropolis of Athens, April 30th (May 12th) 1827."

At this time, there were nearly four months provisions in the citadel, and a settled determination to hold out to the last, was expressed by the whole of the gallant band, who kept possession of it. Soon however, a spirit of discontent began to appear. Some were completely discouraged by the defeat which their countrymen had suffered; and Fabvier has been generally blamed, as having fomented the contention which then arose, between the different parties. Whether it be true that Fabvier was really guilty of treachery, it is difficult to say; but, on the 2d of June, the citadel surrendered to the Turks, on the very same terms which they had already rejected.

The loss of the Athenian capital, was certainly the most calamitous event, which had hitherto occurred in the course of the war. It completely disappointed the ardent anticipations of success, which appear, from the proclamation issued at the dissolution of the National Assembly on the 19th May, to have cheered and supported the minds of the Greeks in their arduous struggle. Amid the gloom which now enveloped their affairs, there still gleamed one ray of hope, from the intervention of the European powers in their favour. The ambassadors of France, Russia and England, were at this time making moderate but firm proposals to the Porte, with a view to save the Greeks from farther bloodshed. Such an interference was imperiously called for, both on account of the barba-

rities which for six years had been carried on in Greece, and the pernicious influence which it exerted over the commercial affairs of the European States in the Mediterranean. By the articles of the treaty, to which the Allied Powers demanded the assent of the Ottoman Porte, it was stipulated, that the Greeks should hold of the Sultan as of a superior lord; and, in consequence of this superiority, they should pay to the Ottoman empire an annual tribute, the amount of which would be afterwards fixed; that the Greeks should be governed by the authorities which they themselves should choose and nominate, but in the nomination of whom, the Porte should have a determinate voice. It was also stipulated, that to effect a complete separation between the individuals of the two nations, and to prevent the collisions which must be the inevitable consequence of so long a struggle, the Greeks should enter upon possession of the Turkish property situated either on the Continent, or in the isles of Greece, on the condition of indemnifying the former proprietors; this was to be accomplished either by the payment of an annual sum, to be added to the tribute which was to be paid to the Porte, or by some other transaction of the same nature. The extent of territory on the Continent, and the designation of the islands of the Archipelago, to which this arrangement was applicable, the Allied Powers agreed to make the subject of a future negotiation.

To this treaty a secret article was appended, by which the Powers bound themselves, in case of the refusal of the Porte, to enforce compliance *with their demands*, by preventing all collision *between the contending parties*. In these arrange-

ments, Austria took no part. To whatever cause this is ascribed, the step is in complete accordance with the illiberal and blinded policy, which has long characterized that government. Jealous of every thing that appeared to encroach on the rights of absolute monarchy, the despotic Emperor of Austria has uniformly resisted all modern improvements, as fearful and alarming innovations. The Russian Emperor, anxious that the intervention of the Allied Powers should be effectual in restoring peace, gave orders for the equipment of a fleet in the Black Sea, with the view, by alarming the Sultan, of compelling his acceptance of the treaty. Unintimidated, however, by threats which he felt confident would never be executed, the Porte refused to admit of any foreign interference in behalf of Greece. From that moment, indeed, his Highness appears to have assumed an unwonted energy and vigour of action. Instant orders were issued for the formation, in the different provinces, of corps, without distinction of religion, and also for the preparation of all the forts of the Bosphorus. Couriers were despatched to Ibrahim and Redschid Pacha, urging them to employ the advantages they had gained in crushing the insurrection in Greece as soon as possible.

About this time it was generally, though falsely reported, that the Pacha of Egypt had thrown off his allegiance to the Turkish government. Urged to it, as he undoubtedly was by the advice of Lord Cochrane, and favourable as all circumstances were for the adoption of such a course, it was surprising that this enterprising chief did not embrace the opportunity to assert his independence.

Had he done so, the Turks were not in a condition to oppose his claims ; and, in case of resistance, the Allied Powers would have gladly protected him. But, strange as it may seem, the Egyptian Pacha preferred subjection to the mandates of the Sultan, and exerted himself to the utmost in aiding him to exterminate, if possible, the unhappy Greeks from the Turkish soil.

In reply to the proposed mediation of the foreign powers, the Porte published a manifesto on the 9th of June, denying its validity. In this document, he represented the Turkish as a mild government, and the Greeks as ungrateful rebels ; and, in a decisive tone, refused to negotiate any further with the European States in regard to Greece. It is highly probable that the Emperor of Austria, actuated as he has long been by hostility to any aggrandisement on the part of Russia, and afraid that such a consequence might arise from the articles of the treaty, incited the Porte to issue this manifesto. Not contented, however, with setting forth this proclamation, the Sultan engaged in a vigorous system of warlike preparations, to defeat the intentions of the Allied Powers in sending a naval armament to the Mediterranean.

In the beginning of July, the affairs of the Greeks in the Morea were in a favourable state. Ibrahim Pacha met with considerable resistance in various quarters. He was repulsed with loss in an attack on Megalospoleon, the best fortified convent in Greece ; and, in ravaging the territory of Keritea for the purpose of supplying Tripolizza, which was in distress for want of provisions, he

was completely frustrated in his intentions by the vigorous resistance of Nikitas and Gennacio Colocotroni. Redschild Pacha had marched into the interior of Greece, but 4000 brave soldiers were stationed in that quarter to oppose him. Lord Cochrane was proceeding with great activity in blockading several ports, and he had captured several Turkish vessels. This brave commander, defeated a flotilla of Egyptian ships off Zante, with the loss of eight vessels.

The Allied Powers, after submitting for some time to the delays of the Porte, in coming to a decision with regard to the treaty, found themselves at length obliged, to adopt a firmer and more decided line of conduct. In terms of the secret article appended to the treaty, the naval forces of the three Powers were ordered to repair to the Mediterranean, with the view of maintaining, in the meantime, a war of blockade.

The information, that the long expected interference in the cause of the Greeks had at last taken place, was soon diffused through the country. The whole of Western Greece again flew to arms. Those chiefs, who had remained safe in the mountains, now descended into the plains; and, in a very short time, their hopes revived, their energies were roused, and, in almost every engagement, they proved victorious.

Towards the end of July, official information was communicated to the Egyptian Pacha, that it was the intention of the European Powers to intercept any armament that might be sent to the Morea. This information, however, had no influence in checking his extensive naval and military

preparations, which were expected to be completed in the beginning of the following month.

Could the Turkish Government, with the powerful aid of Egypt, have made a combined attack upon the Greek territory in its exhausted state, before the Allied Powers began to act with decision, this long protracted war might have been soon terminated. But the secret murmurings and discontent of his own people, prevented the Porte from acting with all the vigour he could have wished. The remains of the ancient corporation of Janissaries were in a state of disaffection. Albania, too, at the same time broke out into open insurrection, and Redschild Pacha, instead of following up the victory he had gained before Athens, was compelled to turn all his force against that district.

The ultimatum of the European powers was laid before the Divan in the middle of August. Their warlike preparations, however, were not in the slightest degree relaxed; and it was fully expected that the Egyptian fleet would immediately leave Alexandria and proceed to Modon, with the ultimate intention of an attack upon Hydra.

The Ambassadors of the Three Powers, waited in great anxiety for the issue of their negotiations with the Porte. At length, on the 30th August, the day on which the final answer of the Porte to their note of the 16th was expected, they waited upon the Turkish authorities to receive it. The answer returned by the Reis Effendi was, that the Porte would submit to the interference of no foreign power whatever with regard to Greece. *On the evening of the 30th, accordingly, a meeting of the Ambassadors was held, when a second*

note was transmitted, stating that the treaty must be carried into execution with or without the sanction of the Sultan; but, to this second communication, the haughty reply was returned, that the Ambassadors had already received the only answer which the Sultan would condescend to give. Immediately on receipt of this peremptory note, the Ambassadors again met to deliberate whether they should or should not demand their passports, when it was determined that they should not, at least for a time, quit the Turkish capital. It has been a matter of considerable speculation, why the Ambassadors allowed the Porte only fifteen days instead of thirty, according to the terms of the original treaty. But they probably saw the necessity of acting with greater promptitude, before the fleet, and convoy of the Pacha of Egypt, should reach the shores of Greece.

The Emperor of Russia, about this time, adopted a measure which seemed to justify the suspicion, that he would take advantage of the slightest pretext for invading Turkey. In addition to the large squadron intended to join the allied fleet in the Mediterranean, he issued a manifesto for the augmentation of his military force to the extent of 50,000 men, who were to be stationed on the frontiers of the Ottoman empire. The triple nature, however, of the alliance was sufficient to acquit the Russian Emperor of all undue ambition.

The affairs of the Greeks in the Morea, were now in a very flattering condition. The fleets of the Allied Powers had arrived in the Mediterranean, and the Turkish army were, in consequence, *completely blockaded by sea*, while Thermopylæ

and the two impregnable passes into the Morea, having been secured by General Church, the Greeks were cut off from all supplies and reinforcements by land. Those unhappy dissensions, however, which have done so much injury to the cause, which the presence of Lord Cochrane had apparently checked, now retarded, in some degree, the proceedings of the Greeks. General Fabvier refused to submit to the orders of General Church, who had been appointed Commander-in-chief of the land forces; and accordingly, a decree was issued by the Legislative Body, declaring him no longer in the Greek service if he persisted in such conduct.

The Turkish Government, still continued to make the most vigorous preparations, for the complete reduction of the Greeks. Six thousand men were sent from Adrianople, and four thousand from Larissa, to join the army of Ibrahim Pacha. The Egyptian fleet, which set out from Alexandria at the beginning of August, now reached Navarino without the slightest obstruction from the Allied squadrons. This forbearance on the part of the European fleets, is satisfactorily accounted for, reflecting, that they were not entitled to act before the stipulations of the treaty of the 6th July, before the 31st of August, which was the day appointed for receiving the final answer of the Ottoman Porte to the note of the three ambassadors. If it had been consistent with the principles which they had declared to be the basis of their alliance, there can be no doubt that the Powers would have prevented the fleet from entering the port of Navarino. As soon, however, as it was known that the ultimatum had been refused, the British squadron

under the command of Admiral Codrington, subjected the Egyptian fleet to a blockade.

On the 25th September, the English and French Admirals repaired to the tent of Ibrahim, and declared to him, that in consequence of the refusal of the Porte to accept the mediation, they had received commands to bring about an armistice *de facto*, and to destroy the forces which should oppose it. The Pacha coolly replied, that as a servant of the Porte, he had received orders to push the war in the Morea, and to finish it by a decisive attack upon Hydra; that he was not entitled to act on his own authority, but would send couriers to Constantinople and Egypt; and that, till their return, he pledged himself not to quit Navarin.

Had an armament so immense been permitted to fulfil its original intentions, the cause of independence would have been completely crushed. This was prevented, however, by the decided conduct of the Allied fleet. They distinctly warned the Egyptians, that if they wished to sail either for Alexandria or Constantinople, they would be conveyed thither and protected from the Greeks, otherwise they must remain in the port of Navarin till farther instructions.

Meanwhile, Lord Cochrane was proceeding with his wonted energy in taking possession of different fortified places. Having bombarded Vassiladi, near Missolonghi, for some hours, he took it by assault. He then sent a light flotilla into the waters of Missolonghi, and landed troops at Anatico, the garrison of which capitulated on the same day. The gallant Admiral then blockaded Missolonghi.

Affairs in Constantinople, remained towards the end of September, in nearly the same state as for a month before. All negotiation with the Porte was at an end ; and the Ambassadors issued an invitation to the persons under their protection, to prepare for quitting the capital, in case of any hostile measure on the part of the Sultan. Fresh supplies of men and horses, were every day arriving from the provinces at Constantinople. All was activity and bustle in the city, still no attempt was made to disturb the tranquillity of the Franks.

Preparations for defence were now made along the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. The forts were garrisoned with artillery, and liberally supplied with ammunition and provisions ; and 400 infantry were sent to reinforce the garrison of the Isle of Tenedos, at the entrance of the Hellespont.

Immediately after the armistice had been concluded between the Allied squadrons and the Turkish fleet at Navarin, a portion of that fleet, in open violation of the armistice, left the port, and proceeded towards Patras, probably with the intention of relieving it. Admiral Codrington took instant measures for intercepting it ; and, on coming up with it, he apprised the commander that he was violating the armistice, to which Ibrahim Pacha had a few days before consented. The Commander replied, that he was acting under the orders of the Pacha. It was then intimated by the British Commander, that on account of this breach of good faith, the fleet would neither be allowed to return to Navarin, nor proceed towards Patras. This resolution, however, was not adhered to, and the fleet was permitted to *return to port.* It is somewhat remarkable, that

some of the Turkish transports belonging to the Egyptian fleet, were provided with Austrian papers to secure them from molestation. This circumstance seems to confirm the suspicion which had been generally entertained, that the Austrian Cabinet was secretly disposed to support the Turkish Sultan.

It might have been supposed, that the decided conduct of the Allies in blockading the Egyptian fleet in Navarin, the large Russian army collecting on the frontiers, and the appearance of two Russian ships of war in the Bosphorus, would have convinced the Sultan of the necessity of yielding to the wishes of the Powers ; but he remained inflexible, refusing to renew the negotiations with the ambassadors. His military preparations were still continued, and a further supply of artillery was sent to the fortresses of the Danube.

On the 15th October, the Austrian Emperor presented a note to the Reis Effendi, in which he respectfully demanded, that the Porte would agree to conclude an armistice with the Greeks. This step, however, the Sultan declined to take, probably imagining that the Allied Powers would not adopt any hostile measures, at least for some time.

After the return of the Egyptian fleet to Navarin, the troops of Ibrahim committed great excesses on shore, putting women and children to the sword, burning their houses, and even tearing up trees by the roots. Anxious to put an end to these barbarous atrocities, gentle remonstrances against such conduct were made by the Commanders of the Allied squadrons, but without effect. The soldiers still continued to lay waste the country.

and to butcher the wretched inhabitants. Finding that all persuasions were ineffectual, and that the armistice was disregarded, the Allies resolved to adopt a more decided line of conduct. With the view therefore, of demanding the acquiescence of the Turkish Commander in their proposals to preserve the armistice unviolated, the British, French, and Russian fleets on the 20th of October, entered the port of Navarin, led on by Admiral Sir E. Codrington. The bay is of an oval form, with two batteries at the narrow mouth. These the Allied squadrons passed without any act of open hostility. The Turks were drawn up in the form of a crescent with their line of battle ships in front at the bottom of the bay, and the frigates and other vessels in another line behind. The principal force was arranged on the right, and six fire-ships were placed at the extremities of the crescent. The Russian squadron was arranged opposite the left side of the crescent, the French to the right, and the English in the centre. The hostile intentions of the Egyptians were soon displayed; for, on despatching a boat from the Dartmouth to one of the Turkish fire-ships, they fired upon it, and Lieutenant Fitzroy with several of the crew were shot. This gave rise to a defensive fire on the part of the Allies, and very soon the battle became general. It raged with unabated fury for four hours, and the scene of wreck and devastation on its termination was complete. From the order in which the enemy's ships were drawn up, the Allied squadron, after having destroyed the first line, were exposed to perhaps still more destructive fire from the second. The battle at length terminated in the *complete destruction* of the Turkish fleet. The

loss on the part of the British and French was very great, but the Russian fleet was very slightly injured, as from the position which it held, it was not much exposed to the enemy's fire. Thus, in the course of a few hours, the Egyptian armament, which had caused such consternation in the minds of the Greeks, was entirely disabled.

At the conclusion of the battle, one of the Turkish captains, who had fallen into the hands of the Allies as a prisoner, was sent to make known to Ibrahim Pacha and all the other Turkish chiefs, that if a single shot was again fired on a ship or boat of the Allied Powers, they would take still more signal vengeance, by destroying all the remaining vessels and the forts of Navarin. As soon as the news of this decisive victory had reached London and Paris, the English and French Governments conferred honorary distinctions on the most meritorious officers of both countries.

An alarm now generally prevailed for the safety of the Ambassadors and Franks at Constantinople, when the Porte should receive intelligence of the battle of Navarin. A more pacific disposition had begun to appear in the councils of the Divan, but it was doubtful what effect the news of the destruction of the Ottoman fleet might have upon their minds. No evil consequences however immediately followed the announcement; the utmost tranquillity prevailed, and the European Ambassadors suffered no violence. An attempt was now renewed with greater vigour, to obtain from the Sultan an acquiescence in the treaty. The Austrian and Prussian Ambassadors joined, in urging his acceptance; but his Highness was unwilling to

make any concessions. At length, a rumour reached Constantinople, that Lord Cochrane and General Church had made a combined attack upon Scio, and compelled the Turks to retire into their forts. This intelligence enraged the Sultan to such a degree, that he issued, on the 9th November, a notice to the three Ambassadors, that he would have no farther connexion with them, unless the Allied Powers should give full reparation for the damages he had sustained by the destruction of his fleet, and apologise for the insult. This notice was received of course, as a declaration of war. A universal alarm now spread through the town. The Franks prepared for immediately quitting the town; and as part of the Allied fleet had reached the Dardanelles, they lost no time in embarking. It was extremely creditable, however, to the Porte, that no outrages were permitted in the city.

The standard of the Prophet was now flying on the mosque of St Sophia, summoning all true Mussulmans to defend the faith against the Infidels. Instant orders were sent to Adrianople, to make preparations for the arrival of the Sultan to head the army. It appeared almost certain, that the three Ambassadors would now quit Constantinople; but negociations, it was thought, might be renewed, and the Austrian Ambassador Baron Ottenfels, pressed upon the Sultan to adopt conciliatory measures. His Highness however, appeared to be unintimidated by the decided conduct of the Allies, and continued to make preparations for war. An embargo was laid upon all vessels, *including neutrals as well as those of the Allied Powers.* But the Consuls of the different *Christian Powers* were assured, that whatever should

men, the safety both of the persons and property of the merchants would be guaranteed.

The embargo on all ships in the port of Constantinople was strictly enforced, and two Russian vessels which attempted to escape were stopped.

Russian Ambassador complained of this proceeding to the Reis Effendi, but that minister answered that the resolutions of the Divan must be enforced. M. Ribeaupierre resolved, on receiving this answer, immediately to quit Constantinople; he was dissuaded, however, from his purpose by the representations of the other Ambassadors. In a few days, the embargo on shipping was removed, and the communication by land also restored.

The Ambassadors, after the delivery of their ultimatum on the 10th, in answer to the message of the Sultan, which they had received on the previous day, met very frequently at the residence of Mr. Lord Canning, to discuss the farther steps which ought to be taken. The Divan had also several meetings, in which the subjects of peace or war were keenly discussed. A conference took place on the 14th, between the French Ambassador and the Reis Effendi, from which the former returned with the hope of an amicable arrangement. The next day the English, and on the 16th the Russian Ambassador, were admitted to a conference with the same minister, in which he displayed the most favourable disposition for the accomplishment of the pacification. It appeared to be in consequence of their separate interviews, that the embargo on the ships was removed on the 17th.

The arrival of the Capitan Bey about this time at Navarin at Constantinople, and the account

which he gave of the dispersion of the Egyptian fleet, excited the utmost indignation in the mind of the Sultan; and a notice was sent to the ambassadors, that his Highness would enter into no further negotiation, except on the conditions already stated in his note of the 9th. The representatives of the Allied powers, however, still anxious to prevent a war, resolved to make a last effort. With this view, they gave intimation to the Reis Effendi, that they would wait upon him on the 24th; and accordingly, on that day, they proceeded in state to the palace, and had a conference of three hours with the Turkish minister. The French ambassador, who spoke for the rest, urged upon the Reis Effendi the necessity of coming to an immediate determination either for war or peace, at the same time stating, that it was the true interest of the Porte, to comply with the propositions of the Powers. In reply, the Ottoman minister entered into a discussion of the right of interference in the affairs of Greece, and the propriety of indemnifying the Porte for the destruction of his fleet at Navarin. This led to a very warm discussion, which, however, terminated without any precise result. In a note sent by the ambassadors to the Porte on the day of the conference, they again invited him to acknowledge a general armistice in Greece, and to make some mutual concessions with the Greeks, in accordance with the treaty of the 6th of July. It was also stated, that if within three days a satisfactory answer were not sent, they would immediately quit *the capital*. At a late hour of the 24th, the Porte *sent for the Dragomans of the Three Powers, to make proposals to them, but no agreement could*

be effected. The ambassadors, accordingly, resolved to demand their passports.

Preparations were now made for departure, and the foreign merchants resolved to leave Constantinople along with the ambassadors, as soon as their passports were obtained. The Turkish government stated to the ambassadors, in reply to their demand, that the upright intentions of the Divan rendered it unnecessary to supply them with passports. All hope of a negotiation was now at an end, and therefore the ambassadors of the Three Allied Powers, after waiting a few days, left Constantinople, and retired to Corfu. The issue of the war, thus virtually declared, can scarcely be doubted; but should it prove the destruction of the Turkish power, the Allies can never be reproached with rashness, or want of forbearance. Perhaps a little more promptitude and decision on the part of the Ambassadors might have been attended with better success. Conscious however, of their power, they wished to give the Porte the latest opportunity of securing the peace and stability of his government, by acceding to the moderate terms proposed in the treaty of the 6th of July. Nothing more can be expected from the war, than the most disastrous consequences to the government of the Sultan. He is blindly rushing upon destruction, and committing his territories into the hands of foreigners. A contest so unequal cannot be of long duration, and the liberation of Greece from the Turkish yoke, may therefore be considered as at hand. Whether an independent government shall be established, cannot in the present crisis be determined; but it may with

safety be affirmed, that the Greeks shall never again be subjected to the insults and oppression of the Turkish government.

The interruption of the commercial relations of the European States by the Greek war, has no doubt been one of the principal causes, which led to the interference of the Allied Powers. From the frequency with which merchant ships in the Mediterranean are plundered by Greek pirates, the trade in the Levant has become quite insecure and dangerous. This state of matters may be easily accounted for, by the operation of peculiar circumstances, on the common laws of our nature. The deplorable condition into which the Greek territory has been thrown in the course of the war, has not only disorganized society as a body, but it has weakened those generous feelings of the heart, which, by actuating the conduct of individuals, establish the comfort and kindness of society. On this principle may be explained those instances of robbery, piracy, and other crimes with which the Greeks are to some extent justly chargeable. When they have constantly before their eyes not only death, but those agonizing sufferings worse than death, to which they themselves and all that is dear to them are exposed, is it astonishing that, in such circumstances, they prove sometimes unfaithful to the laws of patriotism, good feeling, and even common honesty? But it must never be forgotten, that the Greek islanders are often compelled, from want, to follow a system of plunder. By the cessation of commerce, these men, who have long *been considered* the most active and enterprising *merchants in the world*, have been reduced to such *a state of destitution*, that their wives and children

are perishing from hunger ; and can we wonder, that men in these circumstances throw themselves into their boats, with the desperate resolution to seek food wherever they can find it ? There is a point at which deep distress is transferred into madness, and the man wreaks his vengeance on all who can dare to be happy. Such a case calls for pity, not reproach ; it is the constitution of man's nature in one of its sorest extremities.

This picture, by no means too highly coloured, of the present condition of the Greek islanders, represents not a few, but all. In the three islands of Hydra, Spezzia and Ipsara, there are at present no fewer than 15,000, who, from a flourishing condition, have been reduced to starvation. What remains for these men but to become pirates ?

Were the Greeks once established in a state of independence, under a regular government, all temptation to piracy would be done away ; the islanders would again make rapid progress in maritime wealth, by resuming their former activity in commercial speculations ; the inhabitant of the continent would cultivate those fertile fields which Turkish oppression has converted into deserts ; trade and commerce would again revive, and the arts and sciences revisit their ancient seat. There is no country in which the enterprising merchant could with more advantage settle than in Greece, when independent. The climate is delightful ; the scenery the most beautiful in the world ; the people naturally hospitable and kind ; the soil rich, though neglected ; the whole inherent and productive wealth of Greece, in short, is such, that *commercial speculation*, which, in a country like *Great Britain*, becomes injurious when pushed be-

yond a certain limit, would there find an unbounded field for its operations.

For thirty years, Greece has been advancing with astonishing rapidity in commercial prosperity, knowledge, and civilization. Previous to that period, the enterprise of the people was completely discouraged, by the overwhelming imposts to which they were subjected by the Turks, and the monopoly of the commerce of Turkey, which the European merchants, established on the shores of the Levant, had secured to themselves. Towards the end of last century however, matters began to assume a very different aspect. In the treaty of Kainardji, the cabinet of St Petersburg obtained liberty, to establish consuls and vice-consuls in the sea-port towns of the Levant, for the protection of the Russian commerce and subjects. At the same time, the Ottoman Porte granted to Russia the unexpected boon of a free navigation on the Black Sea, and all the seas of the Ottoman empire. It was under the Russian flag, accordingly, that the Greek islanders, in their first commercial enterprise, visited the port of Taganrock, on the sea of Azof. From that time they continued to pursue the same course, under the same authority.

In the end of the second war in 1792, the treaty confirmed the stipulations of Kainardji; the Porte recognised the acquisition of the Crimea, and the whole of the country to the left bank of the Dniester, which Russia had recently conquered. Odessa now became a kind of Greek colony; several commercial houses were established there, and all the merchant ships of the Ionian islands and the Archipelago, traded with the ports of

Odessa, the Crimea, and Taganrock. It was at this period, that three small islands Hydra, Spes-sia, and Ipsara, undertook the navigation of the Black Sea, which was a prelude to that of the Mediterranean. During the revolution in France, when that country was at war with all Europe, except the Ottoman Porte, the Greek islanders profited not a little by the scarcity of provisions which the French at that time endured. Having purchased corn at Odessa or Taganrock, their merchants passed the Dardanelles under the Russian flag; but as soon as they entered the Mediterranean, as subjects of the Porte, they hoisted the Turkish flag, and carried provisions into the French ports, where they sold them at a high price. Enriched by this lucrative trade, they built large merchant ships, and soon supplanted the French in the commerce of the Levant.

The Russian ambassador, knowing that the Porte was afraid to resist a single act of the Northern Government, authorized its agents to grant the Greeks *berats* or diplomas, containing important privileges. The Greek merchants now treated every where as Russian subjects carried on their commercial enterprises with the greatest activity, unmolested by the Ottoman Porte. The embassies of the other powers at Constantinople, encouraged by the success of the Russian policy, began to imitate it, and to issue *berats*, by which the Greek merchants were considered as under their protection. At length to such an extent were these diplomas abused, that Selim III., with the view of remedying the evil, granted new privileges to his subjects, and formed a body of Greek and Armenian merchants, under the title of

Privileged Merchants. The present Sultan a few years ago, in granting privileges to the Greek navigators, was extremely anxious to deprive them of the power of having recourse to the Russian agents, and forging, as was often done, false documents; but his Highness was fortunately dissuaded by one of his ministers, from taking a step which would have proved so injurious to the interests of the Greek merchants.

From the commencement of the present century, the extension of Greek commerce, by the establishment of a great number of their warehouses in the principal cities of Europe, and in the sea-port towns of the Levant, has had a powerful influence upon the intellectual progress of all classes in Greece. The islanders, from the frequent visits which they paid to the ports of France and Italy, acquired much useful information. Schools and colleges for the education of youth were established at every considerable town on the Continent. A spirit of inquiry spread among the people, and literary undertakings received ample encouragement. During the first twenty years of this century, that is down to the year in which the revolution began, more than three thousand original works or translations into modern Greek have been printed at Paris, Vienna, Venice, Leipzig, Moscow, Jassy, and Constantinople.

When the revolution burst forth, the Greeks had reached a point in the scale of civilization worthy of the ancestors from whom they sprung. *The mists of ignorance were fast clearing away, and a more auspicious day was dawning upon Greece. By the establishment of seminaries of*

instruction in many parts of the country ; by the meritorious labours of the venerable Coray and other enlightened men, in translating and publishing important works, both ancient and modern, an enthusiastic desire of knowledge was awakened in the country, and from a state of intellectual torpor, the people in the course of a few years assumed all the activity and energy of their ancient sires.

The revolutionary war checked the progress of the Greeks in knowledge and refinement. The schools and colleges were shut, and the whole attention of the people was directed to the defence of themselves and their country. Exposed for six years to all the horrors of war, how can they be expected to make any progress in intellectual improvement ? To supply his immediate wants, is the first care of man ; and it is only amid the comforts of peaceful society, that the refinement and intelligence of civilized life can be fully exhibited. Once let Greece become independent, and she will resume the career in which she was advancing before the revolution. In that country, which for four centuries past has been subjected to Turkish oppression, there exists more intelligence, and a greater tendency to civilization, than in almost any other part of Europe ; but, by the tyranny of the Porte, society has been completely disorganized ; and had it continued longer, a state of anarchy might have cast its roots so deep, that the lapse of ages would have been necessary to restore society to a peaceable and flourishing condition.

Whatever form of government the Allied Powers may establish in Greece, that country will yet assume an elevated rank among the nations. The character of the people, especially considered in con-

nexion with the local situation of the country and its salubrious climate, is sufficient to ensure such a result ; but it is only under a free government that the internal improvement of Greece will be properly encouraged, and all classes of the population confirmed in a state of increasing prosperity and happiness.

EUROPE IN 1827.

XI.

DENMARK, NORWAY, AND SWEDEN.

The once powerful kingdom of Denmark, which proudly maintained its rank among the first in Europe by sea and land, and was courted by the most influential powers of southern Europe,—which till a very late period, was our nearest competitor for naval glory, though otherwise much weakened and depressed in the political scale,—received in the year 1807, the *coup de grace* from our hands, giving us then no other provocation, except that of being too weak and unable to defend itself. Yet not content with this, in the year 1815, at Vienna, it may be said, that we still more certainly sealed its destruction, when consenting to the separation from the sister kingdom of Norway; by which, though the loss of Denmark, in point of revenue, was very trifling, or even none at all, her political importance was so much lessened, that since that period it is felt nowhere in the affairs of Europe. Previous, however, to this external shock, there *was certainly an inward decay*, for which Great

Britain is in no way accountable. The finances of Denmark were deranged, her commerce drooping, her energy and national spirit fast dying away, and the political malady to all appearance incurable, ever since the memorable year 1660, when the Danes chose to sell their liberties, for the false satisfaction of seeing their proud Nobles humiliated; and delivered up every thing which intellectual beings can surrender, into the hands of power. Yet, since the two events which we have mentioned above, of the first of which we were the sole authors, and consenting to the other, the progress of the decline has been more rapid, and the vital parts have been more grievously affected by the disease.

Denmark, we may now say, has no navy, no commerce, no manufactures; her progress in agriculture is insignificant; her colonies are in the most deplorable state; and her chief source of revenue, the Sound duties, are pledged for a loan contracted in London in 1825. Every thing, but arts and literature, and the nation's affection to the King, is in a state of decline.

Though the reign of Frederick VI. has hitherto not been a very fortunate one, yet all his subjects acknowledge, that it was not in his power to resist the tide of unfortunate events, by which the Danes have suffered so much. The members of the House of Oldenburgh, the most ancient reigning family in Europe, have always been highly gifted with those personal qualities of Royalty, which never fail to render monarchs beloved and revered by their subjects. *It is well known to every Dane, that Frederick VI. has a paternal affection and care for all his subjects; that he loves them all, both high and*

low ; that he gives a hearing to every one who solicits that favour ; that he wishes justice to be administered with impartiality ; and this conviction, which is often manifested with great enthusiasm, when his Majesty appears in public on solemn occasions, goes a great length to render the people happy, even in a state of political calamity and suffering. This mutual good understanding between King and subject is very manifest when his Majesty takes his walk, as he does almost every day, with the Princess Royal, through the city of Copenhagen, often without any, sometimes with a single attendant ; for every passenger bows with reverence, and is kindly noticed in return.

In the choice of his ministers, his Majesty, since the death of the Count Goetske Moltke, has not been very fortunate ; almost all of them have been unpopular. Mr Kaas, President of the Chancery, an office which in some sort corresponds with that of our Premier, died last year, and was little regretted. Of no very amiable or spotless private character, he was haughty and insolent in his manners, and despotic in his measures. Formerly sent as an ambassador to Buonaparte, he was said to have been in great favour, and to have taken a particular liking to the Emperor of the French ; and it was thought that, ever afterwards, he wished to copy him in private and political conduct ; of course, he copied as little men copy great ones. Mr Stegmann, who was appointed his successor, and who formerly was Governor of Soroc-Amt in Seeland, was hitherto highly esteemed for his great vigilance in office ; and, no doubt, the Danes expect much from him : yet his, is none of those highly gifted and comprehensive minds, which w

admire in ministers of state ; and his strictness and accuracy in little things, often borders on pedantry. In point of moral character, he is an ornament to the Danish Council. The Count Schimmelman, who has served his Danish Majesty in almost every ministerial capacity by turns, for he has been Finance Minister, the Leader of the Privy Council, and now he is Minister of Foreign Affairs, was in his younger days, a very able metaphysician of the school of Kant, and a great theorist in every department ; it is not altogether inappropriate to call him the Chateaubriand of Denmark. This worthy man is now turned of seventy, and infirm in mind and body. Yet he has more experience and knowledge of the world than all his colleagues ; and Frederick VI. would not easily, amongst his nobles, find a more fit person for the foreign department. Major Abrahamson is not a member of the Privy Council, but an Adjutant to the King, and his intimate friend. He is a man of great activity, and great zeal in whatever he undertakes. It is owing to his exertions, in a great measure, that Denmark now can boast, that the education of the lower orders in that kingdom is on a better footing than in any other country in Europe. In addition to the Danish parochial schools, he has lately, by his own exertions, established two thousand, on the Lancasterian principle.

Denmark also has her full share of eminent literary characters. Mr Schlegel, a cousin to Aug. and Frid. Schlegel, as Professor of the law of Nature and Nations, is an ornament of the University of Copenhagen. Thorlacius, who is Professor of *Belles Lettres*, (*Eloquentiæ Latine*), is renowned as one of the most profound scholars on the

Continent. Herhold is a physician of great eminence. Oersted's name is of high celebrity in the history of natural philosophy; and Rask is in all probability the first linguist of our age.

Prince Christian, the Heir-apparent to the Crown of Denmark, and his consort Princess Carolina Amelia, while travelling in Great Britain and on the Continent, were universally admired for their literary accomplishments. Their knowledge and love of polite literature is very uncommon. This, coupled with the most refined elegance in manners, as well as with universal benevolence of character, renders them highly admired and beloved by the Danish nation.

NORWAY.—Though the separation from Denmark, in the year 1813, wounded the feelings of the Norwegians, yet it now appears that they are completely reconciled to their political fate. The fact is, that on this occasion, the feelings manifested were more those of an habitual—it might almost be said personal—attachment to the House of Oldenburgh, than those of a genuine political character. The exchange of masters, from Frederick VI. to Bernadotte, even when all the military achievements of the latter, were thrown into the scale in his favour; could hardly flatter the vanity of a nation, which reveres ancient names and descents, as much as any of their northern neighbours. Frederick numbers at least 16 ancestors before him in a direct line, adorned with a Royal Crown; this line again, was connected with the ancient Kings of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, with the Harolds, the Knuts, the Olavs; and it had al-

ways intermarried with the most august Royal families in Europe. If the Oldenburgh sceptre therefore, was, after the time of Christian IV., less powerful than before, it was one of mildness and mercy; this the Norwegians, in particular, had often experienced. Their country is much subject to the rigours of the arctic zone; they were, therefore, frequently visited by scarcity and famine; and the measures adopted by the Danish Government on these occasions, were directed by the most unbounded liberality, and the most tender feelings of humanity. This sufficiently accounts for a custom, which would appear very strange at any other court than that of Denmark. The Norwegian mountaineers, when they came to Copenhagen, would always have an audience of the King; their style, when they applied to the nobleman in waiting, was, "that they wished to speak with *their father*;" and if instant admittance was not granted, they would have thought it very unnatural. Bernadotte's title—that of adoption into a Royal family, in which the Crown was hereditary, and in which a lawful heir existed—was, to say the least of it, a novel one, and certainly unprecedented in the history of Scandinavia; nor was the manner in which Bernadotte disengaged himself from the interests of Buonaparte, calculated to inspire his future subjects with confidence, or with very high notions of the steadiness and disinterestedness of his character. It is also a matter of small import in itself, but however of some moment in intercourse with the Norwegians, that Bernadotte could not, nor can he still express himself *either in the Swedish or the Norwegian tongue. He speaks Italian and French with equal facility*;

the former, a Norwegian is but too apt to consider as the type of treachery, the latter as that of adulation.

All these considerations have had, not perhaps a due influence, but certainly have exercised a great sway over the minds of the Norwegians; they are, however, reconciled to their situation, and seem now, to all appearance, content to be ruled by Charles John. Such is the magic of the mere names, *Liberty* and *Constitution*, for we can hardly assert that the Norwegians, as yet enjoy any thing, beyond the names. This is all they have got in exchange for a King for whom they once professed, and no doubt felt, an enthusiastic attachment. We cannot be surprised that men, no better prepared for this political change than the Norwegians, should not instantly reap all the golden fruits of it. After a long state of inactivity, their *political sense* is only roused; their taste and talent for free discussion, is as yet in its infancy; nor can we name any man among them who has the sagacity to manage a party, either for useful or pernicious purposes, so as to draw any advantage from it, or obviate its inconveniences. All these points, the disciple of Napoleon understands thoroughly, and to a man of his acknowledged talent, it is but an easy task to guide the deliberations of the *Stor-Thing*, the legislative Diet of Norway, and to win refractory members over to his interests. This is a matter of little difficulty among a people where capital is scarce, and where there is plenty of northern pride and ambition. Charles John understands well, that *the Crosses of the Swedish Order of the Polar Star are useful in saving some thousands of dollars,*

and, at the same time, well knows where self-interest will prove more effectual. In the *Stor-Thing*, however, there sometimes is made a show of opposition; laws proposed by, or emanating from the Crown, are frequently rejected. But it is evident, to an uninterested spectator of the drama, that Bernadotte did not propose such measures with any direct intention of seeing them pass, but merely to try what sensation they would produce, and then avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded in the next speech from the throne, to extol his own moderation and respect for the Norwegian Constitution, and, at the same time, to chide the *Stor-Thing* for its stubbornness. Every man understands that the fate of this constitution is quite in his hands, that he may preserve it or destroy it at pleasure; and, under cover of this speech, some outwardly unpretending, yet essentially important crown measure, will pass, when the Diet next assembles. This was the true scope of proposing, in the preceding session, measures directly contrary to the fundamental laws of the constitution and charter; and yet, the Norwegians are very proud of rejecting such bills, and Charles John well satisfied by gaining his main point.

The Norwegian commerce is, however, a little improved, some public works have been executed, others commenced; but the obstacles which nature has presented, from the difficulty of forming communications between one part of the country and another, are almost insuperable barriers to the commercial prosperity of Norway.

SWEDEN.—Charles John has a more difficult part to play in Sweden, than in the *Stor-Thing*

of Christiana. There is in Sweden an ancient nobility; second to none in point of talent and liberal education, except perhaps that of Great Britain. But the Oxenstiernas, the Horns, the Gyllenborgs of Sweden, are at present as little distinguished for literary talent, as they are for skill and adroitness in political intrigue. These, in all ages of Swedish history, have been firm supporters of the Crown, and formidable opponents to an unpopular government. The designation, so much in use in the Northern countries, which styles the Swedes "the Frenchmen of the North," applies particularly to the Swedish nobility; and yet this is only characterizing them imperfectly; for to the vivacity and politeness of Frenchmen, they frequently join Italian cunning and sometimes British manliness. In proportion to the population of Sweden, they form a very considerable class in point of number; and though they are in general not very wealthy, exercise a great influence among the nation at large. There is likewise in Sweden a *tiers état*, there called *Bonde Standen*, or the State of Agriculturists, which indeed in no respect can bear any comparison to the Commons of Great Britain, and is yet superior to all the Northern nations in political skill and experience. *Bernadotte's* title cannot but be very objectionable to many of the nobility; and if the least exception were taken against the measures of his government, that circumstance would furnish the disaffected with the pretext for desperate proceedings. In this country, the measures of Bernadotte are subject to more effectual limitations than in Norway. *The Swedish States are not easily intimidated; they must be reconciled by a variety of political*

manœuvres. He attaches as many of the nobility to the throne as he can gain ; and when he thinks he has secured them, bestows high appointments, either in the army or in some civil office ; for the order of the Polar Star would be altogether thrown away on men, who esteem it very lightly in comparison to what they consider their birth-rights. Every opportunity is seized to ingratiate his son Oscar with the nobility and the nation at large. This young Prince, speaks the Swedish tongue to perfection, and must study the habits and the propensities of the people ; he leans to the popular side of every question, and it is more than probable, that Bernadotte would not dislike if he even moderately opposed his own measures, if he could by that means gain a few more personal adherents, and lay the foundation of his popularity, as the future Sovereign of Sweden. The army under his Majesty's own immediate superintendence is maintained in the highest state of perfection ; and military exercises and pageants are very frequent.

In many respects Bernadotte's government is an active one. Commerce is favoured ; learning and manufactures promoted and encouraged ; good understanding with other nations, particularly with Great Britain, is cultivated ; and his neighbours, the Danes, are treated, upon the whole, with national courtesy.

It is difficult to estimate fairly the state of learning and literature in Sweden, for it produces from time to time such brilliant phenomena, as would do honour to any country. The names of Linnæus, Bergman the natural philosopher, and Scheele, are well known. They possess at present Berzelius, the dis-

coverer of the chemical proportions, whose numerous works on natural philosophy, chemistry, and mineralogy, are so universally admired by the learned in every country. Bishop Tegnér is also highly esteemed as a poet; his genius is of a high order, and his works of lasting merit; yet, viewed as a whole, the literature of Sweden is inferior to that at Denmark, and dependent both upon the literature of that country and also upon that of Germany; for most of the works used in the classes of their Universities, are translated either from Danish or German. In ancient Northern literature, and particularly the Icelandic, in which the University of Uppsala possesses so many excellent MSS., they are as yet but unsuccessful rivals of the Danes; which is not easily accounted for, as their language is more nearly related to the ancient Scandinavian tongue, than the modern Danish. The celebrated Mr Rask, while residing in Stockholm, did much, however, to rouse their activity in this department.

The literature of Norway, is now more intimately connected with that of Sweden since the union of these kingdoms, and may therefore be considered conjointly with it; but the language of Norway being modern Danish, is different from that of Sweden, and Norwegian literature is therefore still in its taste and spirit more akin with that of Denmark than the Swedish. In the University of Christiania, Professor Hansteen is a man of eminence. His discovery of the magnetic poles of the earth, is of great importance, not only for navigators, but for natural science in general. Professor Krum Keyser, is a distinguished natural philosopher; Sverdrup is a good Greek scholar;

Skjolderup a great anatomist; and Paul Moller, a native of the Island of *Funen* in Denmark, who was called from the University of Copenhagen, where he was yet a student, to fill the chair of Moral Philosophy in Christiania, is a poet of distinction in Scandinavia. He is besides a very eminent classical scholar, and his amiable character cannot fail to render metaphysics attractive to the young Norwegians.

AMERICA IN 1827.

I.

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INDEPENDENT America extends from 40° south lat., to 50° north lat. including, it is supposed, about twelve millions square miles. From its northern extremity to the Pole, are situated the possessions of the English and Russian Governments, while the district beyond its southern extremity, to which the name of Patagonia has been given, is still unappropriated by any of the civilized nations.

In the Southern Independent States, to which this chapter is limited, are included the Confederation of Mexico, which reckons twenty-four republics attached to it; Guatemala, or Central America, which counts in its Confederation seven constituted republics; the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata, which witness, according to the latest accounts, the deputies of fifteen republics assembled in their Congress; the republic of Bolivia, to which seven states have been united; and the extensive republics of Colombia, Peru, and Chili. In the midst of all these republican states

stands the solitary empire of Brazil, to which, however, a constitutional government has been given. The French, English, and Dutch Guianas, situated between Brazil and Colombia, are subjected to the regime of the islands, not of the continent of America. The population of these countries is far from being proportioned to their extent. In Colombia, there are three millions of inhabitants; in Brazil, two and a half; in Guatemala, Buenos Ayres, Chili, and Peru, a million and a half.

The impracticable and absurd attempt on the part of Spain, to compel the subjection of her South American colonies, has at length ceased; but as the new States are protected by no treaty, they are in constant danger of invasion from without, and conspiracies from within. In these circumstances, the military spirit prevailing among the people, prevents them from following out the necessary plans for the internal improvement of the country. There cannot, however, be a doubt, that South America will in time, if not speedily, assume that calm pacific policy, which has for forty years characterized the measures of the great North American Republic. There is very little probability besides, when the progress of liberal sentiment in Europe is considered, that any further attempts will be made to prevent the complete emancipation of the South American States.

Attempts have been made, in almost all the republics and confederations, to restore the Spanish government, but they have fortunately been unsuccessful; and as no assistance can be expected *even from the most arbitrary sovereigns of Europe, the Free States* need feel little alarm for the securi-

ty of their constitutional system. If there is no probability of a war between any of the European nations and the South American republics, there is as little probability that they will attack each other. Most of them are surrounded with immense deserts, which separate them from those which might otherwise become rival States. The republic of Colombia, in its vast extent, is surrounded on three sides by the sea, and on the fourth by immense deserts. The precarious possessions of the English, French, and Dutch in Guiana, prevent it from all collision with Brazil: the powerful assistance afforded to Peru by Bolivar, showed, however, that some connexion might exist between Colombia and that country; but the history of the war also shows, that difficulties required to be surmounted, which would have startled any army not engaged in a war of independence. Peru, strengthened by the Andes, separated from Chili by the desert of Atacama, has very few neighbours; Chili has still fewer; and the Republics of La Plata have none, except Brazil. Guatemala, situated between Colombia and Mexico, is connected with the continent on the north and the south, only by narrow isthmuses, which might be easily defended.

In the disposition of the people also, there is an effeminacy, which will probably have a great influence in maintaining peace. The facility with which the recent changes have been effected in most of the States, displays an unwillingness on the part of the people, to sacrifice their ease, or to expose their fortunes or their lives, for the *sake of maintaining interests which are less dear*

to them than those of their families. Thus, the confederation of Guatemala has been separated from that of Mexico, not only without bloodshed, but without even exciting the slightest animosity. In Colombia, the insurrection in Venezuela, in favour of the federative system, has been hitherto productive only of threats and negotiations, but not of open hostilities. The recent rise of the republic of Bolivia, between Peru and the United Provinces of La Plata, has taken place, without any attempt on the part of these two republics to assert their authority over the detached provinces. The confederation of the republics of La Plata, has shown striking forbearance towards Paraguay and its late dictator, Dr Francia, who, in the very centre of their confederation, was enforcing that blind obedience, from which the surrounding States had been recently delivered.

There is one exception, however, to the pacific disposition of the Free States, in the recent war which has broken out, between the Brazilian empire and the United Provinces of La Plata, or rather the Republic of Buenos Ayres,—a war, which, besides being impolitic and unnecessary, will retard the progress of the two countries in all that is calculated to promote their internal prosperity. Previous to the commencement of the present war, the republic of Buenos Ayres was in a very flourishing condition. Its independence had been recognised by the two first maritime powers ; it kept up a friendly connection with all *the other States of America*, and enjoyed all the *advantages* of its new government. The *lands had risen in value* ; the population of the capital

was increased more than a third, notwithstanding the losses occasioned by the revolution; and so flourishing had the commerce become, that, according to official documents, laid before the British Parliament in 1825, the English merchandize imported into the Republic of La Plata, had increased to the value of more than 97,000*l.* beyond the exports from the same country, to the other South American republics; and the imports from Buenos Ayres into England, surpassed, by more than a half, those of the other republics. The congress had assembled, and begun to discuss the fundamental code of the constitution; emigration had been so liberally encouraged, that a great number of Europeans had settled in the republic; every thing, in short, appeared to encourage the most brilliant hope for the future prosperity of Buenos Ayres, when that war burst forth, which it was certainly the interest of both the conflicting parties to have avoided.

The fertile province of Monte Video, from its position in regard to La Plata and Buenos Ayres, has long been the subject of dispute between the Kings of Spain and of Portugal. The only argument which the latter monarch alleged in favour of his right was, that La Plata was a natural limit to his territories; whilst the claims of the former were grounded on the right of prior occupancy, which has always been admitted, in regard to colonies. The province besides, was first peopled by the Spaniards; and Monte Video was founded by them, with the resources of *Buenos Ayres*. Conscious that their rights to the possession of the provinces were well founded,

the Spaniards never acceded to the pretensions of Portugal, which was at length obliged formally to renounce them. Such was the state of matters when the revolution began. At an early period after the constitution was established, Artigas, who rose against the Government of Buenos Ayres, under the pretence of Federalism, settled at Monte Video; and not contented with laying waste the surrounding country, he made incursions into the neighbouring Portuguese possessions. John VI., with the ostensible view of preserving his territories from the influence of the revolutionary spirit, took a part in the quarrel between Artigas and Buenos Ayres; and embraced the opportunity of occupying Monte-Video with a numerous body of troops, at the same time declaring, to obviate all suspicion, that he would remove the troops as soon as order was established. The Government of Buenos Ayres was unable, in its distracted state, to do more than protest against this step. On the departure of John VI. for Europe, his plans were attempted to be followed out by General Lecor. For this purpose, he organized at Monte Video, a congress, composed of men mostly in the pay of Brazil; and by their influence, he procured the union of the province with the empire of Brazil. Don Pedro, who fulfilled the duties of Emperor, in the absence of his father, gladly accepted this act of congress, without inquiring into its validity. Such is the plea on which the Brazilian Government at present founds its title to the possession of the province of La Plata. The act, however, which was originally obtained by deceit and bribery, has been since repealed by the Free Con-

stitution ; and besides, having never been formally sanctioned by the Congress of Brazil, the cession was denied to have been legally obtained in the Cortes at Lisbon, in 1822.

Monte Video, impatient of subjection to the Brazilian yoke, solicited the aid of Buenos Ayres in asserting its independence. That republic, however, although willing to assist in such a cause, judged it imprudent to engage alone in war, against an enemy so much superior in force. To gain time therefore, an envoy was sent to Rio Janeiro, who, after remaining for two years, returned without having effected any thing by his negotiations. It was then resolved to wait until the Congress had assembled, when either the negotiations would be renewed, or war proclaimed. The conduct of Don Pedro rendered it probable that war would be inevitable. No longer concealing his ambitious projects, he still continued to increase the number of his troops in the province, under the pretence of sending them as colonists ; nay, he showed his intention of subjecting to the Brazilian authority the provinces of Entre Rios and Paraguay, whose dictator, Francia, was on the most friendly terms with him. War seemed now approaching, when in the month of April 1825, Lavalleja, a Montevidean officer, set out from Buenos Ayres with forty companions, to rescue his countrymen from oppression. On his arrival in Monte Video, the people rose in a mass, and in a short time Lavalleja was at the head of several thousand men. General Lecor determined to punish these insurgents, and to send some of the principal inhabitants of the province to Rio Janeiro as prisoners. *But having joined Colonel Fructuoso Rivera,*

who had just left the service of Brazil, Lavalleja was so successful, that he blockaded Lecor by land, although a large reinforcement had arrived from Brazil. During this time the patriots of Banda Oriental had gained considerable success in the country. A detachment of three hundred Brazilians who had crossed the Black River, and penetrated as far as Elperdedo, were attacked by an equal number of patriots, and so dispersed, that some days after the engagement only twenty-seven men rejoined the principal body. This was a decisive blow to the Brazilian cause in the La Plata provinces, and nothing remained in their hands but Monte Video.

Lavalleja now established a provisional government, and convoked a national representative assembly in the town of Florida, which repealed the act of recognition and the oaths of fidelity to Portugal and Brazil, which had been deceitfully wrested from the provinces.

These events excited no small ferment in Buenos Ayres. The government accordingly took measures of precaution, and resolved to demand of the citizens every sacrifice necessary to support the honour and dignity of the nation. Whilst the inhabitants of Banda Oriental were defeating the Brazilians in various engagements, the Congress admitted their deputies to a seat in its assembly. After having taken this step, the Government of Buenos Ayres addressed a note to the Brazilian Emperor, giving a clear statement of matters as they stood, and expressing a desire that an amicable arrangement should be effected. To this note *Don Pedro* gave no other reply, than a declaration of war. This declaration was answered with en-

ergy; and on the 1st January 1826, the Congress of Buenos Ayres unanimously authorized the national executive power to repel the aggression of Brazil by every lawful expedient.

At this time, had England intervened between the conflicting parties, hostilities might have been prevented. The intimate commercial connexion existing between Great Britain and Buenos Ayres, as well as a former agreement with Lord Strangford, rendered this interference a matter of the highest probability. So much advantage would have accrued, not only to Buenos Ayres but to her own interests, from a speedy termination to the war, that it is difficult to assign a reason for the neutrality which she has strictly maintained. Lord Ponsonby, the minister-plenipotentiary at Buenos Ayres, deceived the government with vain promises. On his arrival, he proposed the mediation of England, on condition that Brazil should renounce her claims to Banda Oriental, and that Buenos Ayres should pay an indemnity. This was readily acceded to, and the sum was appointed to be fixed by Lord Ponsonby. The British envoy, however, instead of adhering to the former proposals, now ventured to stipulate, that Buenos Ayres should also formally renounce her claims to Banda Oriental. This absurd proposition was indignantly rejected on the part of the government by Bernardino Rivadavia, who had been named President in the month of February 1826.

The new President entered upon his duties amid peculiar difficulties, which, however, by his energy and activity he soon overcame. The country required to be organized; money, troops, and a national marine were wanted; every thing in

short, rendered the situation of Rivadavia somewhat critical. In these circumstances, the utmost decision was necessary; and in the course of a few months, the President, aided by General Alvear, succeeded in organizing the most effective and numerous regular army that had ever been formed in South America. At this time, the blockading squadron were completely frustrated in their intentions upon Buenos Ayres, by the superior naval dexterity of the brave Admiral Brown, who, with only a few ships, defeated the enemy's fleet, consisting of sixty sail, in several engagements. After having exhausted all possible means of conciliation, and even proposed to no purpose, that the two armies should abandon Banda Oriental, and leave the inhabitants to arrange their own affairs, the Government of Buenos Ayres at length resolved to prosecute the war with vigour. General Alvear assumed the command of the army, and by his kind and conciliatory conduct, he put an end to that discord which Brazilian intrigue had raised among the soldiers.

In consequence of the appointment of General Brandt to the command of the Brazilian army in Rio Grande, considerable dissatisfaction had been expressed by the troops. As soon as intelligence of this reached the young Emperor, he came to the resolution of assuming the command in person. Such a determination seemed to evince that decisive measures were likely to be adopted. It was the intention of the Emperor to disembark on the western bank of Buenos Ayres, and having combined his own forces with those from Monte Video, to make an attack upon the town. Instead of being alarmed on the announcement of this scheme,

the people only displayed the more strikingly their public spirit, by volunteering their services and their money for the defence of their country.

Don Pedro sailed from Rio Janeiro on the 23d November, in the Don Pedro I. of 74 guns, accompanied by the Isabella frigate, a corvette, and some transports, having 700 Germans on board as a reinforcement to the army on the frontier of Rio Grande. But no sooner had he arrived at the army, than the young Emperor began to feel alarmed at the difficulty of his undertaking, and speedily returned to his capital, where, on his arrival, he received the sad intelligence of the death of the Empress.

In a short time after, General Alvear entered Rio Grande, and cut off the Brazilian army. For a long time it declined fighting ; but at length, on the 20th February 1827, an engagement took place on the banks of the Ituzaingo, in which the republican army gained a complete victory. On the 9th of the same month, Admiral Brown had captured or destroyed, in the waters of the Uruguay, the whole squadron of the enemy's small boats ; and on the 24th he compelled the blockade squadron to fly, after having suffered a considerable loss. Six days after the victory of Ituzaingo, only one-third of the Brazilian army remained ; the Germans, who had accompanied Don Pedro, joined the Patriot army, and the whole province of Rio Grande, on which the Brazilian Emperor depended so much, appeared anxious to assert its independence.

After the victory, Rivadavia, much to his honour, renewed the same proposals which he had

formerly made. "For the same reason," said he, "that the greatest reverses would have found me inflexible on this point, I will not change, notwithstanding our victories, because our proposals are founded on principles independent of circumstances." The Emperor seemed now to be more inclined to peace; and Garcia accordingly was sent as an envoy from Buenos Ayres to Rio Janeiro, with express instructions, that he should endeavour to obtain for his government the possession of Monte Video, and, if that should be refused, he should demand that it be declared independent of both States. At length, after some negotiation, preliminaries were settled, chiefly by the mediation of Lord Ponsonby and Mr Gordon, to a treaty between Buenos Ayres and Brazil. On the 9th June, Garcia sailed from Rio Janeiro to obtain the ratification of the treaty by the republic. No sooner had the envoy arrived in the capital, and presented the treaty to the members of government, than it was indignantly rejected. Garcia was declared to have neglected his instructions in regard to the terms of peace, and as it was thence concluded that he had betrayed the republic, he was obliged to fly in order to escape the vengeance of an infuriated populace.

Both parties now began to make preparations for carrying on the war with the utmost vigour. It could not be expected that Buenos Ayres would consent to relinquish Monte Video and Banda Oriental, and thus to sacrifice the national honour. Don Pedro, on the contrary, was unwilling to concede what he had the slightest pretence for retaining. *How much wiser policy would it have been, to confirm his own authority in Brazil, by*

uniting into one empire the widely scattered colonies which compose his territory, all jealous of each other, and attempting to organize federalist governments for themselves!

Rivadavia, on the 7th June, issued a proclamation, calling upon his countrymen vigorously to resist the Emperor of Brazil, and condemning the treaty concluded by Garcia at Rio Janeiro. This was the last official act of the President; for, on the 30th of the same month, he sent in his resignation to the Congress; and, on the 5th July, St Vincent Lopez was elected, by a great majority as his successor. The resignation of Rivadavia arose from the great difference of opinion existing among the members of the Congress, as well as the people, in regard to the continuation of the war. These internal differences, however, were soon settled, and warlike preparations had been made, when a ship of war from Rio Janeiro, arrived in the River Plate, with a flag of truce. The Brazilian Emperor, embarrassed in his finances, and in perplexity with regard to the state of Portugal, was unwilling to prosecute the war, and therefore adopted the wiser measure of consenting to make Banda Oriental an independent state, under the protection and guarantee of Great Britain. A treaty, founded on these conditions, was accordingly transmitted to Buenos Ayres. As soon as intelligence of this treaty reached London, despatches were sent to Rio Janeiro, expressing the readiness of the British Government to guarantee the independence of the Banda Oriental.

The mode of government adopted by the *Buenos Ayrean Republic*, is that which is termed *Central*. Though this form had been esta-

lished by a great majority of the Congress, several governors of provinces were unfortunately discontented with the arrangement. Bustos, in particular, the governor of Cordova, expressed himself decidedly against the central government. The Congress sent to the legislature of each province one of its members, to present the constitution for their acceptance, and especially to explain the motives which led them to prefer the Central system; but some of the governors prevented these deputies from fulfilling their mission, so that the public opinion has in few places been consulted, and the province of Monte Video alone has adopted the constitution. The government judged, that the best means of surmounting the obstacles with which it is surrounded, is to encourage the free and unfettered liberty of the press. Liberal opinions are thus diffused among the people, and the benefit of the new system will soon be appreciated. The inhabitants of the provinces will learn, that it is an essential characteristic of the constitution, to respect the local interests; and councils of administration, named directly by the people in each province, regulate the details belonging to it with a complete independence, and without the intervention of the superior's authority. The acts of these councils are only submitted to the examination of the general Congress, and the president chooses the governor from a list of three members, presented by each local administration. Thus the Buenos Ayrean Republic will possess, as far as possible, all the *advantages* of the federal system, without its *inconveniences*.

It is gratifying to observe, that though the minds

of the Buenos Ayreans must have been much occupied with the events of the war, the Government never for one moment relaxed its efforts to improve the institutions of the Republic, and promote the education of the people. With such activity indeed were their schemes conducted, that there is at present in Buenos Ayres a university, a college for students in the ecclesiastical sciences, on Jansenist principles; a college for students in the moral sciences, and a central school for mutual instruction, which provides teachers for the other parts of the republic. The National Library contains more than 30,000 volumes. Arrangements were commenced last summer, under the superintendence of M. Moreno, Professor of Chemistry in the University, for lighting the town with gas, extracted from an oleaginous substance, which they obtain from the flesh of mares. From a prejudice prevailing among the people, that it is improper to use mares for the purpose of riding, these animals are easily obtained in large numbers, as they abound so much in the country, that they are hunted by the peasantry.

The plans projected by the Government for the internal improvement of the country, must no doubt have been considerably retarded by the war, and the consequent interruption of commerce. But even amid these disadvantages, their progress has been considerable. The convents have been abolished; the undue influence of the Catholic clergy has been diminished, and republican principles fully established in the affections of the people. As soon, therefore, as war shall have ceased, and *commercial activity* recommenced, the Argentine

Republic will resume its plans for the promotion of the prosperity and happiness of the people.

The extent of territory included in the republic of Colombia, and its vast natural resources, renders it of perhaps more importance than any other part of South America. It was on the 30th of August 1821, that the constitution was proclaimed. The sittings of the Congress were transferred to Bogota, and Santander was authorized to execute the office of President, in the absence of Bolivar.

The attention of the Patriots was then directed to Peru, where the Royalists had established themselves on apparently a firm footing. Bolivar accordingly carried the war into that quarter; and after having been successful in several engagements, he acquired possession, by capitulation, of the whole territory of Quito. Shortly after, Morales was defeated by General Paez, and thus the whole Royalist army was destroyed, and the cause of the Patriots established in Peru. Since that period, the Spaniards have again raised the standard of the mother country in that district; and Bolivar was under the necessity of returning to Peru, where he has at length succeeded in restoring a quiet submission to the Constitutional government.

In the absence of Bolivar, dissensions arose in Colombia, which, had they not been speedily quelled, would have destroyed the republic. It had been decreed, in one of the fundamental laws of the Constitution, that in 1830, the form of the government should be finally settled by a general meeting of the deputies from all the provinces. Impatient, however, of delay, General Paez, political and military chief in Venezuela, in 1826 declared publicly in favour of the Federative, in pre-

ference to the Central System, and threatened to detach Venezuela from the union, if his favourite system was not immediately adopted. This bold and daring step excited great commotion throughout the whole of the republic. "Public confidence (to quote the words of an intelligent physician in that quarter) began to totter, the foreign merchants, who had been crowding the ports of Colombia, removed with their goods as fast as possible to St Thomas. Trade was consequently at a stand, and general distress began to pervade the province, when, to crown the whole, Paez was declared a traitor by the supreme government at Bogota, at the very time that he was acknowledged by the public bodies of the province as political and military chief, and when, in fact, he had military possession of the country." The state of confusion is thus well described by a gentleman at present resident in Caraccas.

"The administration of this government for some time past has been that of a reign of terror. Yesterday the whole country exhibited one of those striking scenes, which none but an eyewitness can form any conception of. Anxiety and fear were impressed on every countenance. Soldiers were hastening from one station to another, and, on the road, depriving every one of their horses, mules, and accoutrements, carrying with them volunteers, if they could find them, or forcibly driving before them individuals of every nation whom they met, while whole families were taking refuge in the neighbouring mountains, in the hope of eluding the licentiousness of the federal faction."

Bolivar had just completed the liberation of Peru, and was establishing her constitutional govern-

ment on a proper basis, when he received intelligence of the distressed state into which the rash conduct of Paez had thrown the Colombian States. No sooner did the tidings reach the ears of the Liberator, than he instantly formed the resolution to return to the assistance of his country. The moment he arrived at Guayaquil, he issued a proclamation, calling upon the people to lay aside their dissensions.

Bolivar had reached Guayaquil on the 12th September, and left it on the 18th for Bogota. All classes of his countrymen looked with anxiety for his return, in expectation that his genius and popularity would immediately restore tranquillity. On his arrival in Bogota, he issued a proclamation on the 23d November, in which he noticed the rumours which his enemies had industriously circulated in regard to his intention of ascending the throne of South America, and distinctly disclaimed all such intention, asserting, that he considered "the destiny of Liberator as far more sublime than the throne." During his residence in the capital, the different Charge d'Affaires from the United States, from Mexico, and from Great Britain, were introduced to his Excellency, for the purpose of congratulating him on his return to his country after five years' absence. From Bogota he proceeded, attended only by his staff, to Maracaibo, where he issued another proclamation in the middle of December. Venezuela now began to assume a more pacific appearance; and Paez, perceiving that opposition would be fruitless, submitted himself into the hands of Bolivar, who, with *his characteristic magnanimity*, forgave all his errors; and, besides receiving his submission, con-

ferred on him the title of Superior Chief of Colombia. Paez, on his part, issued a proclamation, in which he exhorted the people to receive Bolivar as the Father and Liberator of his country. "The patriot chief had full confidence in his influence over the minds of the people, for he came, attended only by his aide-de-camps; no army followed him; he had only to show himself and raise his voice, and immediately the rebels submitted, and anarchy was at an end."

"Confidence seems re-established," says the correspondent above quoted, "in Caraccas. People, who, from fear, confined themselves to their houses, are again abroad; the roads, which were before almost deserted, are once more crowded with mules burthened with goods and produce,—every thing, in short, seems to wear the exhilarating appearance of improving trade."

The arrival of Bolivar was expected at Caraccas with the most intense anxiety. The municipality of that capital made arrangements for the triumphant entry of the Liberator, which for some time appeared to engross the whole minds and hearts of the people. No better account of this interesting scene could be given than that of an intelligent eyewitness, with which we have been favoured.

"It was, in truth, a grand sight. The people were, and seem still in a state of madness. Even now, I hear nothing but the discharge of guns, and the loud *Vivas* of the populace. For two days previous, we have been on the tiptoe of expectation of his arrival; but the evening before last, we knew for certain of his approach, and the next morning's dawn was ushered in with loud discharges of musketry and the ringing of bells,

“ About six o’clock, deputations of all the public bodies went out to meet him, among whom the resident foreigners of Caraccas and La Guayra formed themselves into one corps, bearing with them the flags of their respective nations. This body advanced farther than any of the others, and were consequently the first to meet him, about eight miles from town. We were advised of his approach, and had so marshalled ourselves on the road, that he had to pass through our open ranks, on his entrance into which, he was hailed with ‘ *Viva el Libertador Presidente de Colombia !* ’ with loud and long cheers.

“ This was the first view I had of him. He was mounted on a white charger. His dress was that of a Captain General of Colombia, dark blue with broad red facings, richly embroidered with gold. He came quite unattended but by his staff, relying on the affection of his countrymen.

“ He is an admirable rider, and celebrated for the swiftness with which he travels : At the acclamations with which he was received, his horse, which was at full speed, was reined up, and his hat and white plumes waved gracefully to all. An appropriate address was then made to him, to which he replied with the utmost readiness and elegance, in a strain of high compliment to the foreigners. After which, he was again at speed, and our body formed close upon the rear of his aids, which post of honour having been won by being the first to meet him, we maintained through the whole procession.

“ At the entrance of the city a triumphal car was in readiness for him, into which he was borne by the arms of the crowd. His aide-de-camps then

advanced, and rode by the side of the car, in consequence of which arrangement, our foreign body (much to the annoyance of the militia regiments), came immediately close upon his person. My situation was most favourable. From being assigned a station in the front rank, I enjoyed a full view of his countenance for several hours.

“ This man is quite unlike any of the portraits of him I have ever seen. He is remarkably dark ; his figure about a middle size, and very thin ; his face long and sharp, with a fine expressive forehead. His eyes are large and dark, and the general expression of his face is melancholy and stern, with strong lines of irritability. His hair is thin and rather grey, and his whole countenance, from exposure and toil, gives him the appearance of sixty, while he is only at the age of forty-four. No one can look upon him without strongly associating with his countenance the idea of a man of sorrow.

“ The streets for two or three miles through which we had to pass, were filled with triumphal arches,—the windows and balconies crowded with no ordinary display of splendour and beauty, from which, as he passed along, thousands of fair hands showered down flowers on his head, and thousands of soft lips hailed him with ‘ Viva nuestra Bolívar ! ’ ‘ Viva el Redentor de los Pueblos ! ’ ‘ Viva el Libertador Presidente de Colombia ! ’ The Spanish face is not easily brightened into an expression of great joy. But on this occasion every eye seemed to dance in brilliancy. I never saw such a scene of enthusiasm. ”

On the entry of the Liberator into the city, *the people repaired to the principal cathedral to*

render thanksgivings to God for his goodness. Bolivar was then conducted to his house, amid the acclamations of thousands of people. For some days every individual forgot his own private concerns, busied only in public rejoicings. The humility, condescension and kindness, which this great man exhibited, endeared him the more to all classes of the people, and heightened that enthusiastic admiration of his character which had been long entertained by all that were acquainted with him.

It is a sublime sight, to behold all the qualities of a hero combined in the same person, with all that is amiable in private life. The courage of Bolivar is undaunted. Even in the darkest periods of the revolutionary war, he has never, for one moment, despaired of the republic. He had resolved that South America should be free, and with this view he has often been heard to say, that he would never sheath his sword till every hostile Spaniard was driven from its soil. His disinterestedness can scarcely be equalled. Twice have his patrimonial estates been devastated by fire and sword, yet he persists in refusing aid from his country. His perseverance and devoted zeal in the cause of liberty and independence, cannot be too highly appreciated. In almost every point of view, in short, the character of Bolivar is worthy of admiration.

It might, perhaps, be expected that some account should be given of that military chief, whose imprudent conduct nearly overturned the infant republic of Colombia. Paez, who is by birth a *Llanero*, or native of the elevated plains of *Varinas* in Venezuela, was originally an illiterate

herdsman. His boldness and intrepidity of character, however, the surprising acuteness and penetration of his mind, with his uncommon bodily vigour and activity, seemed to point him out as destined for a higher station in society. The circumstances of the times, too, were peculiarly favourable for calling into action the powers of this extraordinary man. His restless ambition, accordingly, led him to engage in the revolutionary war. At the head of a numerous but undisciplined band, he at one time fought bravely in defence of the Patriots, and at another engaged in a system of plunder on his own account. Bolivar perceiving the growing influence of Paez, and anxious to enlist his eminent qualities decidedly in favour of the Patriots, appointed him to the regular army. His heroism and warlike genius was, from that moment, of the utmost importance to the cause of independence. The military renown of Paez is chiefly founded on his conduct at the famous battle of Carabobo, which was followed by the occupation of Valencia next day, and of Caracas three days after. In consequence of his intrepidity in this engagement, Bolivar promoted him to the office of Captain-General on the field, and intrusted him with the chief command.

From the violence of his passions, Paez is often hurried into indiscretions ; but these are as often forgot amid the eccentricities of his character, which transform the frown of those whom he has offended into the good-natured laugh at his expense. He is nearly forty years of age ; and though his education is still very defective, he has, from the acknowledged sagacity of his mind, been

invested with the office of a Senator of the Republic. The elevation of his rank, however, does not prevent him from engaging in the most childish amusements.

He is very fond of leaping and swimming horses, of attacking bulls, and fighting alligators. Perhaps the most curious, as well as the most laudable of his feats, was the capture of a Spanish schooner, which lay at anchor in the Orinoco. This was accomplished by a party swimming from the shore, each holding his sword in his mouth.

Such is a brief outline of the character of Paez, who excited such commotion in Venezuela, but whom the presence of Bolivar awed into silence and submission. There is something in the moral influence of greatness which is irresistible—a remark which was beautifully illustrated in the tranquillity which every state assumed as he passed along, from the capital of Peru till he reached Caraccas. Here his triumph was completed in the surrender of Paez, and the subsequent good order and peace of the state. But the fame which Bolivar had attained, and the love and admiration with which he was greeted by a grateful people, excited the envy and jealousy of some who attempted to tarnish his well-earned reputation, by representing him as having been actuated by a desire to obtain the absolute control of the Free States. This unjust calumny, however, was fully and for ever set at rest by his resignation of the office of President, on the 6th February. For fourteen years he had held the office ; and, during that time, every obstacle to the future prosperity of the republic *had been removed* ; and he now, therefore, begged *permission* of the Senate at Bogota, in a letter

addressed to the President of the Chamber, to retire from public duties, into the peace and enjoyment of domestic life. This decided resolution was certainly to be deplored ; but it seemed to have been adopted in consequence of the unworthy suspicions which have attached sinister motives to his conduct. That Bolivar is ambitious cannot be denied, and he himself candidly confesses it ; but his ambition has only been directed for the good of his country, and this last step affords a decided proof of the integrity by which he is regulated in his conduct.

Great anxiety was felt for the safety of the republic, as soon as it was known that Bolivar had resigned his authority. So intimately connected did the people consider his government with their political welfare, that it is remarked in a Journal of Caraccas, published at the time, “ To consent to the renunciation of his authority, would be tantamount to giving our consent to the renunciation of our social existence. ”

The fears which were entertained for the welfare of Colombia, on the resignation of Bolivar, were soon allayed by the notice, that he had consented to retain his authority till the meeting of the great National Assembly in 1830. In a proclamation issued towards the middle of June, he stated, that the counter-revolution had originated in the treachery of the Colombian troops, auxiliaries in Peru, who had endeavoured to establish a new government on the ruins of the republic, and called upon his countrymen to unite in marching against them. So unpopular, however, had Bolivar become, that instead of listening to the call, *they burned him in effigy, as well as the procla-*

mation. Those temporary rumours which envious and malignant men raised to the disadvantage of Bolivar, soon subsided ; and the general impression, both at Caraccas and Bogota, was, that his re-acceptance of the Presidency, would be followed by the speedy return of prosperity in the republic. Considerable disturbance had arisen in Bogota, by the secret attempt of Santander to bring about a counter-revolution. The people were divided in opinion, some declaring themselves partisans of the President, and others of the Vice-President. The plan, however, proved unsuccessful ; and in a short time Santander was almost entirely deserted by his followers.

At the request of the Senate, Bolivar set out for Bogota, to take the oath as President of the Republic. He reached it on the 10th September, when he had the satisfaction to perceive that all disturbance had ceased, and that all classes were unanimous in welcoming his arrival. After having taken the oaths, he presented to the Chamber an account of the measures to which he had been compelled to resort in virtue of the extraordinary powers with which he had been invested in cases of necessity. He also issued a decree prolonging the Session of the Chamber, and recommending to their attention the state of the finances, with a view to devise plans, for the payment of the interest on the debt, which had been incurred with foreign countries.

It is already five years since the Constitutional government was established in Colombia, and it *cannot be denied* that it has given rise to several *important changes* in the internal prosperity of the *country*. The taste for agricultural pursuits which

the revolutionary war had so much discouraged, is beginning to revive ; the commercial relations with other countries are renewed and extended ; the mechanic arts are making considerable progress. In each of the parishes, which amount in all to 1340, there is a school established by order of government ; and in the principal towns, central schools of mutual instruction send forth qualified teachers to the provinces. There exist at present in Colombia 52 schools, each including 67 pupils at an average, on the Lancasterian plan, and 434 schools, with an average of 37 pupils in each, which follow the old mode of instruction. The government has also recently directed its attention to the establishment of female schools.

A law of 1821, ordered the foundation of a college in each of the thirty-seven provinces of Colombia ; and by another law, of the same date, the convents, which include no more than seven persons, have been suppressed, and their property consigned over to the colleges. The Executive Government also, has re-established those colleges which had been shut, in consequence of the war. The three Universities of Caraccas, Bogota, and Quito, reckoned five colleges in active operation, besides private classes. Seven of them have been re-established, and nine more founded. In all the establishments of instruction, there are at present 960 students of the languages, 667 of philosophy and the natural sciences, 49 of medicine, 312 of law, and 87 of theology. New chairs are about to be founded, for instruction in the political sciences, and the most difficult parts of the natural sciences. They have been pre-

vented, however, from putting this project in execution, by the want of funds, books, and professors.

The importance of Mexico, especially in a commercial point of view, has thrown an interest over all its concerns. Did this sketch proceed on a strictly geographical arrangement, this republic ought to have been treated under the head of North America; but convenience calls for its introduction in connection with the Southern Independent States.

After the abdication of the throne by Iturbide, a Constitutional Government was established; and although the Spaniards have been constantly making fruitless attempts to restore the old regime, the republic is now firmly rooted in the affections of the people. To such a flourishing condition has the Confederation risen, that it includes no fewer than twenty-four distinct republics. The independence of Mexico has been fully recognised by Great Britain, and commercial intercourse is carried on to a great extent. But this State is still far from having attained the vigour of the great Northern republic. The government, however, aware that the diffusion of intelligence among the people, is the great expedient for strengthening and confirming liberal institutions, have prepared such plans for the public instruction, as, if actively carried into effect, bid fair to raise the Mexican republic to a high rank among nations. Though the elements of its power should never *consist* in the extent of its population, or in its *naval and military* force, it may, by a well-organized system of public education, give origin to *one of the strongest bulwarks* on which a liberal

government can rely—an enlightened and reflective people. It is when knowledge spreads along the length and breadth of the land, that the State is most securely guarded against external enemies as well as internal disaffection. Should all the South American republics follow the example of Mexico, in regard to her establishments for popular instruction, the time is not far distant when they shall attain a high degree in the scale of civilized nations.

The plan on which the educational system of the Mexican Republic is formed, has been most maturely considered by Government. It consists of three parts rising from the primary or gratuitous instruction, which proceeds on the Lancasterian method, to the highest degree of professional attainment. They have also instituted a general Academy or College, with eleven professional chairs.

The professors of the second and third degree of instruction, compose the Academy of Sciences, which has enrolled a considerable number of members. The object of this institution is to promote the progress of the Sciences and the Arts, and to publish annually a statistical account of the schools in the republic, and the mode of instruction in each.

This plan of education is extensive, but if perseveringly followed out, will fix the era of the definitive consolidation of the republic.

AMERICA IN 1827.

II.

NORTHERN STATES.

Before, and during the continuance of the late war with France, Great Britain took little comparative interest in the concerns of her North American Colonies. The succession of events on the great theatre of European warfare, were of so momentous a character, that they almost exclusively absorbed public attention, without excepting the Government itself. Canada was in consequence neglected at home. Its local administration was defective—too frequently oppressive there. Governor Craig arrested the persons of the lieges without cause, and liberated without justification. His government was that of the bayonet, to which even members of the Legislature were obliged to succumb. Sir George Prevost's administration was mild and equitable, well adapted to the Canadian people in times of repose, but unsuited to the perils of war, and the dangers of *invasion*. He was deficient in moral energy, *and unfit for command*. Sir John Sherbrooke

succeeded, and during his administration, originated those dissensions between the Commons and Executive, which still unhappily prevail. The Duke of Richmond followed,—his government was firm and conciliatory. His melancholy death soon occurred, and the present Governor-General, the Earl of Dalhousie, assumed the task of government.

During the two preceding sessions of the Provincial Parliament, acts were passed, making the professors of all religious denominations, equally entitled to claim the advantages which the foundation of public schools was intended to impart. The education of the people, upon the most liberal principle, thus became a prominent feature in the local administration. A bill, similar in principle to the Scotch *cessio bonorum* act, was brought in, and passed into a law. Debtors, thus, upon the surrender of their estate, ceased to be imprisoned, because they might have been unfortunate, and were only detained when fraud was apparent. The government recommended a Registry Bill, but it was negatived by the Commons. The Legislature adopted measures for the prevention of smuggling with the United States—for the encouragement of the circulation of gold—and for facilitating grants of the public lands. Measures, having for their object the improvement of the communications,—the better regulation of the municipal affairs of the cities of Quebec and Montreal—subdividing the province into counties—increasing the representatives of the people in the *ratio* of an increasing population, were agitated in the Assembly, but opposed or rejected by the Upper House.

The Imperial Parliament provided for the extinction of signorial rights—qualified all holders of signories and fiefs, to convert them into tenures of free and common soccage. Restraints injurious to the liberty of private contract were taken away—prohibitions to the exportation of wheat to the mother country suspended for one year, and a duty of 5s. per quarter substituted in their place. Acts were also passed, authorizing the British Colonies to trade with each other. One inexpedient act was passed, prohibiting the importation of all provisions from any countries but Great Britain and Ireland. This prohibition became nearly ineffectual, as a frontier of one thousand miles with the United States could not be guarded by custom-houses, or preventive service corps; and, in consequence, as before, all the provisions required were supplied from the United States.

The Provincial Parliament of 1827 was convened in the month of January. The civil list was the principal topic of the Government and Legislature's consideration; indeed it absorbed every other. To understand the subject, it becomes necessary to recapitulate different events.

Canada was surrendered to the British arms, in terms of the capitulation of September 9th 1760. It was governed by the civil and criminal law of England till the passing of the Quebec Act, by the British Parliament, in 1774, which restored to Canada the civil law of France, while it retained the criminal code of England. It will be necessary briefly to enumerate the different acts of *the British Parliament*, relative to the Government of Canada, as, from the different interpretations

attached to these, have originated the existing disputes between the mother country and her colony.

The first in detail, Act 14. Geo. III. chap. 88, imposes duties upon the rum, brandy, and molasses, imported into Canada, in lieu of the taxes levied by the King of France, antecedently to the capitulation, as well as by the British Government subsequently to that event. The act directs that these duties shall be applied to the support of the civil government and the administration of justice of the province of Quebec, now divided into the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

The Act of 18. Geo. III. chap. 12, enacts, that the Parliament of Great Britain shall not impose any tax or assessment on any colony, payable in British America, except such as may refer to the regulations of commerce.

The Act of 31. Geo. III. chap. 31, bestows upon Canada a representative constitution, but leaves in force all former acts, unless specially repealed. The constitutional act divided Canada into the Upper and Lower Provinces, and gave to each a separate legislature. The revenue derived from the first recited act, did not latterly exceed 34,000*l*. The expenses of the civil government exceeded 74,000*l*. The Provincial Parliament was requested to supply the deficiency, which it did. The Government of the Upper Province, in terms of the constitutional act, claimed a portion of the amount drawn from the impost duties. Differences arose, as might have been foreseen, relative to the distribution of the funds raised between the provinces. These differences were not adjusted, and the Legislature allowed the provin-

cial act to expire, from which a portion of these duties was derived.

The Imperial Parliament, by Act 3. Geo. IV. c. 119, enacted that these duties should be renewed, for the support of the civil Government. This act still remains in force, and only refers to a part of the duties, the greater portion being still derived from an unrepealed provincial act.

Such are the Acts of Parliament. The different views taken of their import by the Mother Country and the Lower Province, and of the subsisting relation of Canada to Great Britain, are as follows :—

1. The British Government, and the English party, maintained that the constitutional act of 1791, left in force all previous statutes, unless specially repealed, and that, in consequence, the Act of 14. Geo. III. c. 88, remained still in operation.

2. That the Canadian Legislature has no control over the duties derived from the Act 14. Geo. III. c. 88, since its provisions not only impose certain duties, but direct the application of their amount to the support of the civil Government.

3. That as the Parliament of Great Britain grants the civil list during the King's life, the Provincial Parliament should be required to do the same.

4. That since the Provincial Parliament allowed the act to expire, from which a portion of the duties were derived for the support of the civil Government, it became necessary that the Imperial Parliament should resume the right of *taxing the colony* to supply the deficiency.

5. That the great expenditure of the British Government, in behalf of Canada, and the protection afforded to its trade, by enhancing the price of property—giving exchangeable value to otherwise useless productions—and increasing the rate of profit, should induce the Canadians more to appreciate the civil immunities and pecuniary advantages derived from British connexion, than to cavil at the provisions of such laws as the Government may have deemed it expedient at different periods to promulgate, and to sow dissensions and cherish intemperate passions, to the total neglect of the consideration and adoption of such measures as might be best suited to advance the prosperity of the province.

6. That the House of Assembly, during the reign of the late King, offered to provide for the whole expense of the civil Government; that this was necessarily rejected, as the grant was to have been limited to one year, and as its acceptance would have implied the renunciation of the Crown's rights, to have disposed of the appropriated revenue, derived from the act 14th Geo. III. c. 88.

7. That the House of Assembly arrogated to themselves the functions of the Executive Government, by annually attempting to apportion the amount of the salaries of the judges, and the other officers of the civil Government.

8. That the House of Assembly, under the influence of their Speaker, Mr Papineau * and others, refused to grant the civil list as required;

* The Speaker elect, who has been disallowed by the Governor at the opening of the new Parliament.

that the Government was prevented from accepting of it with the unconstitutional conditions attached to its vote, and was in consequence reduced to the alternative of dissolving the Parliament, without receiving the supplies, that the sense of the people might be taken upon the conduct of their representatives, and of authorizing, upon its own responsibility, such disbursements of the public money as the exigencies of the civil administration required.

The Canadians, on the other hand, maintain—

1. That granting a representative constitution to Canada necessarily conferred all the privileges and functions belonging to such a system of Government ; that it is the inherent right of the Commons to originate money grants to the Crown, and that the exclusive possession of this privilege is the principal guarantee of a free constitution.

2. That, at all events, it is the duty and the privilege of the Legislature, and especially of the Commons, to controul and regulate the expenditure of the public money derived from themselves ; that they are not debarred from the exercise of this right by the Act 14. Geo. III. c. 88, which directs generally the application of the taxes it imposes to the support of the civil administration ; and that, therefore, they are entitled to exercise their discretion in the apportionment of this, or of any other fund raised by their own authority, among the different officers of government.

3. That they cannot be equitably required to grant the civil list during the King's life, as in England, because, by the act already recited, the *British Parliament* imposes a portion of the taxes

which provides for its support, and because the act in question may be qualified or repealed at the pleasure of that Parliament ; that, as the constitutional act reserves the right to the mother country, of regulating the navigation and commerce of the colony, the amount of the duties imposed by the provincial Legislature itself, for the maintenance of the civil Government, is subject to the variations which any change in these regulations may cause ; and that, in consequence, the House of Assembly cannot be consistently required to pledge itself for a permanent revenue, which it might not always have the means of providing.

4. That the analogy of the civil list, as granted by the British Parliament to the King, did not apply, since it was first given upon the accession of George III. in lieu of the hereditary and other specific revenues belonging to the Crown, the controul of which reverted to the Commons—that, in Canada, the Crown, besides retaining its hereditary revenue, derived nearly one half of the taxes, paid by the people, from an act of the British Parliament—that, in consequence, the analogy cited remained inappropriate, so long as the rights and privileges inherent in the Canadian constitution continued to be exercised by the mother country.

5. That the civil list of Great Britain, did not exceed one sixtieth portion of the annual supplies ; that the commons of Canada had no supplies to grant, save such as the disbursements on account of the civil list required, excepting a few for local purposes—and that, should the whole supplies be *permanently granted*, the principal privilege of the

commons would be surrendered, and the balance of the constitution overturned.

6. That it is a necessary corollary of the propositions, that the commons originate money grants—fix their amount—and that, in the circumstances of Canada, such must be annual, that they must annually determine the amount of the specific items, which the whole civil list embraces, or in other words, annually vote the amount of the salaries of the judges and other officers of the crown.

7. That in Great Britain, the Judges hold their offices for life, or good behaviour, and can only be removed by impeachment, or by the addresses of the two Houses of Parliament, while in Canada, they are arbitrarily removeable by the crown—that being dependent on the Crown for their continuance in office, it becomes necessary they should be dependent on the commons for the enjoyment of their salaries.

8. That the Legislatures of Upper and Lower Canada having disagreed in attempting to apportion the funds due to each province, derived from duties imposed by themselves, allowed a temporary act to expire enacting the payment of a portion of such duties—that the British Parliament by act 3. of the present King, c. 119, renewed the imposition of this tax, in total defiance of the 18. Geo. III. c. 12., and of the constitutional act of 1791, renouncing the right to impose duties or assessments payable in any colony of British America, excepting such as applied to the regulation of navigation and commerce—and that, the Act 3. Geo. IV. c. 119, being in total violation of *the national faith*, ought to be repealed.

9. That the great mass of the population being

Canadian, the English settlers being for the most part confined to the large towns, a most unequal division of the offices in the gift of the crown in Lower Canada, among English and Canadians, takes place—that the British ministry retain chiefly these appointments in their own hands, leaving few in the gift of the governor—that while they do not complain of military and clerical appointments being confined to the English, they consider, upon the whole, that the following distribution is unfair :

Governors, English,	-	2	Canadian	0
Secretaries, do.	-	1	Do.	- 1
Legislative Council, do.		21	Do.	- 8
Officers of ditto, do.	-	4	Do.	- 5
Executive Council, do.		9	Do.	- 2
Officers to ditto, do.		4	Do.	- 0
Officers of departments, do.	52		Do.	- 13
Judges, King's Council, and Clerks of Court, do.		36	Do.	- 9
Officers of Customs, do.		34	Do.	- 2
Clergy of Established Ch. do.	33		Do.	- 0
Military appointments, ex- clusive of the regiments in Lower Canada, do.	-	118	Do.	- 0
		<hr/>		
English Office-holders,		314	Canadian do.	40

These appear to be all, or at least the chief topics of difference between the Lower Province and the mother country, and were all subjected to discussion in the Legislature in the course of the Session.

The government was of opinion, that the re-
2 D 2

fractory spirit of the commons deserved rebuke. Lord Dalhousie, in consequence, went down, and having ordered the attendance of the Commons, in the Legislative Council, he severely admonished—prorogued, and finally dissolved them. Thus, in the usual routine of events, the dismissed members started into persecuted patriots, and their intended punishment became their actual triumph. At the new election in the course of the summer, they were unanimously returned by the people, to the almost total exclusion of such retainers of the government, as had formerly held seats in the assembly. They were convened in the month of November, elected their former speaker Mr Papineau, to the same office—his opponent put up by the government only obtaining four votes. The governor disallowed the election. The brand of discord was thus again tossed among the Canadians—its natural results ensued—angry remonstrances from the Commons,—inflamed feelings among the people—public meetings *pro* and *con*—fustian harangues on the one side, and popular rhodomontade on the other. The Parliament was prorogued, till his Majesty's pleasure was ascertained upon the point in dispute; and so the year 1827 concluded.

The Act of 31. Geo. III.'c. 31, having bestowed a free constitution on Canada, it may be inferred, that as long as Great Britain continues to impose taxes upon the colonies, however the technical constructions of the acts of Parliament may bear out the authority derived from them, so long will *the odious exercise* of this power foster jealousies, *and perpetuate* divisions between the Canadian Legislature and the British Government. It is

inconsistent with the moral nature of man, to suppose that when certain faculties are bestowed upon him, of a political character, that he will submit without a struggle to the limitation of their exercise. External power may extort obedience—it never can a willing submission.

The Constitutional act assumed, that free institutions were adapted to the state of society in Canada. It was a solecism in politics in the mother country, to grant the right to the Canadians of governing themselves, while it retained the odious privilege of taxing their money without their consent. It was wilfully throwing the apple of discord among them, and which the dear-bought experience of the revolution of the neighbouring colonies, might have induced her to withhold.

The mass of the Canadian people are by no means well educated; but the class from whom their representatives are derived, are, in general, intelligent men—the resident gentry—the descendants of the French settlers, who know their rights, and duly appreciate their exercise. Their leaders—Messrs Papineau, Viger, and Vallieres—are men of extensive information and powerful talent.

The other American colonies, fifty years ago, successfully resisted the attempt of the mother country to impose taxes upon them. They possessed constitutional rights—they had intelligence to comprehend their nature and extent, and moral energy to resist their violation—and such are the Canadians now. The British Government doubtless declared them in the wrong. Crown lawyers decided that they were constitutionally taxed. *Still, in 1788, a few years afterwards, Great Britain renounced the right of taxing, but, as all*

know, at too late a period to secure the return of their allegiance.

Great Britain, it appears, continues, by 14 Geo. III. c. 88, legally to tax Canada ; and, by 3 Geo. IV. c. 119, unconstitutionally, and in violation of an antecedent unrepealed act, to impose an additional tax. If the constitution of the human mind be alike in all countries—if there be truth in history—and if differences do prevail between Great Britain and her colony, the Canadians will only submit to pay taxes, till they can effectually resist.

The discontents in Canada are nearly of as old a date as the acts from which they take their rise. It is unjust then, as the Canadians do, to blame the local governments as their cause. They are the natural consequences of the policy of the mother country. It is above all cruel and unjust, to blame the present Governor-General Lord Dalhousie, who has thanklessly laboured for seven years to improve the internal condition of Canada. As relates to the general policy of the mother country, his Lordship has only to obey his instructions, for the tenor of which he cannot be held responsible. In his local government, he has recommended and originated many measures, which, but for the fatal spirit of dissension, might in succession have been adopted. His earnest endeavours to promote the education of the people—to enact a law for the registration of all deeds relating to the transfer of real property, equally essential to the security of possession, and to the interests of commerce—his exertions to form and improve roads—to cut canals—erect hospitals and jails—and lunatic asylums,—will entitle him to the appro-

bation of his country, and the gratitude of the Canadians. The latter have frustrated many of his wise and judicious measures. The former, it is to be feared, will not appreciate his services, as the sphere of his exercise has been in a distant colony. Such are the natural consequences of the competition of national and colonial rights. Till the subject of differences be removed, distrust and jealousy will prevent that hearty co-operation between the local government and the legislature, without which no public measure can be dispassionately considered, and no public good permanently secured.

Commerce seems wholly left to the English residents. They are universally enterprising, and are in general respectable and intelligent; as, indeed, British merchants are, all over the world. The English share the retail trade with the native Canadians.

The English and Canadian party, are mutually exasperated against each other. Their reciprocal abuse is most unmeasured; and epithets of reproach are applied by able and intelligent men, towards their political adversaries, which, if directed towards a political opponent, in good society here, would exclude the utterer from company ever afterwards. This may proceed from the comparative coarseness of manners, as well as from the peculiar relations of the political parties towards each other in that country. The newspapers necessarily adopt the slang of their readers; some are cleverly edited, but most are scurrilous and intolerant, on both sides of the question. The *Montreal Herald* appears to be the most moderate; partly, perhaps, in consequence of the

Editor having been a recent importation, and not as yet sufficiently imbued with party virulence, to give a corresponding die to his political incubations. It is a well-conducted journal, and contains, occasionally, able original articles. It is lamentably sprinkled, however, with letters, sonnets, and treatises, the called wisdom of its literary subscribers. The Canadian Quarterly Review is an able work, contains able original articles, and many judicious solutions. On politics, it partakes of the conventional fury of its diurnal or hebdomadal contemporaries. Mr Sheeny of Montreal, has published a volume of lyric poems, which deserve to be better known. They are simple, natural, chaste, sparkle sometimes, and please always. A Mr Smith has published a History of Canada. It embodies useful information, but is ill arranged, and inelegantly written.

We shall proceed to make a few remarks upon the present state of Upper Canada. A joint-stock land company was formed in London in 1825, for the purchase of the crown and clergy reserves of land in that province. An act passed to that effect, and a royal charter was granted to the company. They purchased from the crown and clergy four millions of acres, for five hundred thousand pounds, payable in instalments. They engaged besides, to expend one hundred thousand pounds in improving lands, &c. ; and an additional two hundred and fifty thousand in building Protestant churches, school-houses, grist, and saw-mills in each township, where the company might possess one-half of the soil. They engaged also to build bridges, and open roads in their different townships, and to settle the whole in a certain number of years.

They will thus expend in all 850,000*l.* for the benefit of Upper Canada. 500,000*l.* of this money is appropriated by Act of Parliament to the maintenance of a Protestant clergy.

The clergy, often more keenly alive to things temporal than their peculiar vocation seems to rant, denied the right of the crown to alienate their reserves. It was decided that it had no right, and they in consequence still retain their own reserves ; and as the Act of Parliament provides, that the whole purchase-money, exclusive of what may be required for the stipulated outlays, shall be appropriated for the maintenance of a Protestant clergy, the Church of England, insignificant in the numbers of its adherents, but strong in its influence with the local government, attempted, during the last year, to make the amount in question exclusively available to themselves, besides their own reserves, which, as stated, they have refused to surrender even for a pecuniary equivalent. The Presbyterians on the other hand considered, that the general expression " Protestant clergy," contained in the Act of Parliament, alike included their sect ; and having remonstrated against the monopolizing spirit of their Episcopalian brethren, the Government at home, or rather the able and intelligent Colonial Secretary, Mr Wilmot Horton, perceiving at once the equitable nature of their claim, admitted their construction of the act of parliament ; and the fund in consequence is to be appropriated to the maintenance of a Protestant clergy of both establishments, the Church of Scotland being the established religion in one portion of the British dominions.

Mr Galt, the distinguished novelist, is at the

head of the Canada Land Company there, and by his talent, acuteness, and indefatigable activity, promotes the Company's interest and the prosperity of the province. He is well supported by Dr Dunlop, whose great information and dauntless intrepidity, enables him to meet and overcome difficulties wherever they may present themselves. The crown has granted to the Company a million of acres in addition, in lieu of the clergy reserves, retained by that body.

The navigation of the St Lawrence, is interrupted at several places by rapids, occasioned by shallows, and projecting rocks through and over which this mighty river gushes in torrents, or purls in rills. To obviate this disadvantage, the Home Government and the Canadian people have both contributed, and operations are now going on, which will complete an unbroken water communication from the western shore of Lake Superior, to the ocean, extending to the distance of two thousand miles. The Bellard Canal, the first of the series, connects Lake Erie and Ontario, the navigation of which is interrupted by the falls of Niagara. It is from 60 to 70 miles long. Its estimated cost is 200,000*l.*, its stock being 16,000 shares at 12*l.* each. The Rideau is the next in succession. It commences at Kingston, and intersects the country in a northern direction for 120 miles, till its confluence with the Ottamo River, at Sante de la Chandun. It is forming at the exclusive expense of the British Government; and will obviate different obstructions in the navigation of the St Lawrence, extending in all to the distance of twelve miles. Besides, the British Commis-

sioners for the negotiation of the Treaty of Ghent, thought proper to cede a small island in the St. Lawrence, below Kensington, on the American side of which, the river is alone navigable, thus debarring British bottoms of the benefit of that means of transference, in the event of future wars. The Ottawo is navigable from the Rideau Canal, till its junction with the St. Lawrence, 70 miles below, with the exception of about twelve miles. A canal is forming to avoid this obstruction, and will soon be completed. Lastly the Lachine Canal, running from the village of the same name, on the St. Lawrence, extends to Montreal, about nine miles farther down, and thus completes the navigation of the river and the lakes. The formation of these canals, and the establishment of the Land Company, have already given a stimulus to Canadian industry; a comparatively cheap outlet is secured to agricultural productions, and a certain employment is afforded to the poor emigrant.

It has generally been supposed, that were Government to carry into effect the proposed measure of transporting a certain portion of our redundant population, to this colony, that it would but add to the numbers and strength of the United States; it being assumed that the greater portion of emigrants would finally settle there. Give the people, however, good laws, an equitable government, and leave them untaxed, and their national feelings and personal interests, will alike combine to keep them in Canada. Many of the emigrants, who land at Quebec, from getting no immediate employment, and having no fixed destination, *proceed to the States*; but all prefer, if occupation

be given, to remain in Canada. On the contrary, many emigrants, who may have reached America by Boston, New York, or Philadelphia, may be seen bending their foot-steps through the wilderness, and enduring every species of fatigue and privation, to regain the protection of the British flag. Such are the, powerful feelings of nature, and the unextinguishable love of country, even among the rudest of our kind, among those who may be landed as outcasts, disguised as poor, or ridiculed as ignorant. Besides, in these States, assessed taxes are imposed, and rigorously exacted. Canada is nearly free from all such imposts, the only exception being a small land-tax, expended on making and repairing roads ; and occasional assessments, for the erection of jails, court-houses, &c. But these are for local, not Government purposes, and are, therefore, more cheerfully paid, as their expenditure palpably benefits all the community. Other assessed taxes, are ever odious, and always grudged. Thus, national feeling and personal interest, induce an emigrant to give the preference to Upper Canada.

The local government, during this session, introduced an alien act, the principal provision of which enacted, that every settler, who had been resident for seven years, should take the oath of allegiance, renounce for ever fealty to his native country, and receive only, in compensation, the rights of a British subject in Upper Canada,—still remaining an alien as related to the remainder of *the British empire*. This oath was required to be *taken and registered within four years of the date of the enactment ; and the penalty attached to con-*

tenacy, was the forfeiture of all real property, and all the rights of action which its claim or possession can found. As remarked, a great part of the population were American citizens, who had substantially, though nominally, become British subjects. They were landholders, and all since their occupancy, had deemed their titles valid, till the enactment of this law. It passed both Houses with considerable opposition, and, as the Constitution required, it was remitted home for the Royal assent. The enactment produced universal discontent; meetings were held, and violent language used; and petitions were voted, imploring the Crown to withhold the Royal assent, as its enactment would invalidate all the titles to real property, of the community, extinguish mutual confidence in the principal transactions of life, and vest in the local administration, an inquisitorial *surveillance*, from the terms of the registration required, over the conduct and concerns of every inhabitant, who happened not to have been born in the country.

The Government at home have superseded the operation of this law, and one much less objectionable in principle, and greatly modified in its provisions, will be introduced in the following session. The Legislature was prorogued without any additional important business being brought before it.

The people of Upper Canada are for the most part Presbyterians or Methodists. There are comparatively few Episcopalians among them, though the latter be *the established faith*. The clergy are *not numerous, but, as a body, are respectable*. The *people have not very steady devotional habits*.

A. Cunningham
Perth 1843

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VOL. XXIII.

LIFE OF ROBERT BURNS.



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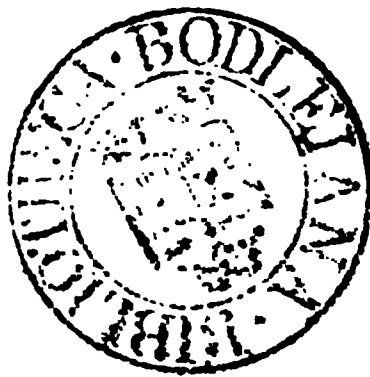
LIFE
OF
ROBERT BURNS.

BY
J. G. LOCKHART, LL.B.

**OF HIM WHO WALKED IN GLORY AND IN JOY,
BEHIND HIS PLOUGH UPON THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.
WORDSWORTH.**

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE AND CO.
AND
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1828.



EDINBURGH :
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO.

TO
JAMES HOGG, AND ALLAN CUNNINGHAM,
THIS VOLUME
IS
INSCRIBED,
IN TESTIMONY OF
ADMIRATION AND ESTEEM.

PREFATORY NOTICE.

SOME apology must be deemed necessary for any new attempt to write the LIFE of BURNS. The present adventurer on that field has only this to offer—that Dr Currie's Memoir cannot be, with propriety, detached from the collection of the Poet's works, which it was expressly designed to accompany; and the regretted projector of Constable's Miscellany sought in vain for any other narrative sufficiently detailed to meet the purposes of his publication.

The last reprint of Dr Currie's Edition had the advantage of being superintended by Mr Gilbert Burns; and that excellent man, availing himself of the labours of Cromek, Walker, and Peterkin, and supplying many blanks from the stores of his

own recollection, produced at last a book, in which almost everything that should be (and some things that never should have been) told, of his brother's history, may be found. There is, however, at least for indolent readers, no small inconvenience in the arrangement which Currie's Memoir, thus enlarged, presents. The frequent references to notes, appendices, and Letters not included in the same volume, are somewhat perplexing. And it may, moreover, be seriously questioned, whether Gilbert Burns's best method of answering many of his amiable author's unconscious mis-statements and exaggerations, would not have been to expunge them altogether from a work with which posterity were to connect, in any shape or measure, the authority of his own name.

As to criticism on Burns's poetry, no one can suppose that anything of consequence remains to be added on a subject which has engaged successively the pens of Mackenzie, Heron, Currie, Scott, Jeffrey, Walker, Wordsworth, Campbell, and Wilson.

The humble purpose of the following *Essay* was, therefore, no more than to com-

press, within the limits of a single small volume, the substance of materials already open to all the world, and sufficient, in every point of view, for those who have leisure to collect, and candour to weigh them.

For any little touches of novelty that may be discovered in a Narrative, thus unambitiously undertaken, the writer is indebted to respectable authorities, which shall be cited as he proceeds. As to the earlier part of Burns's history, Currie and Walker appear to have left little unexplored; it is chiefly concerning the incidents of his closing years that their accounts have been supposed to admit of a supplement.

L I F E
OF
ROBERT BURNS.

CHAPTER I.

**"My father was a farmer upon the Carrick Berder,
And soberly he brought me up in decency and order."**

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 25th of January 1759, in a clay-built cottage, about two miles to the south of the town of Ayr, and in the immediate vicinity of the Kirk of Alloway, and the "Auld Brig o' Doon." About a week afterwards, part of the frail dwelling, which his father had constructed with his own hands, gave way at midnight; and the infant poet and his mother were carried through the storm, to the shelter of a neighbouring hovel.

The father, William *Burnes* or *Burness*, (for so he spelt his name,) was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, whence he removed at 19 years of age, in consequence of domestic embarrassments. The farm on which the family lived, formed part of the estate forfeited, in consequence of the *Rebellion of 1715*, by the noble house of *Keith Marischall*; and the poet took pleasure in saying,

that his humble ancestors shared the principles and the fall of their chiefs. Indeed, after William Burnes settled in the west of Scotland, there prevailed a vague notion that he himself had *been out* in the insurrection of 1745–6; but though Robert would fain have interpreted his father's silence in favour of a tale which flattered his imagination, his brother Gilbert always treated it as a mere fiction, and such it was.* It is easy to suppose that when any obscure northern stranger fixed himself in those days in the Low Country, such rumours were likely enough to be circulated concerning him.

William Burnes laboured for some years in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh as a gardener, and then found his way into Ayrshire. At the time when Robert was born, he was gardener and overseer to a gentleman of small estate, Mr Ferguson of Doonholm; but resided on a few acres of land, which he had on lease from another proprietor, and where he had originally intended to establish himself as a nurseryman. He married Agnes Brown in December 1757, and the poet was their first-born.

William Burnes seems to have been, in his humble station, a man eminently entitled to respect. He had received the ordinary learning of a Scottish parish school, and profited largely both by that and by his own experience in the world. "I have met with few" (said the poet, † after he had himself seen a good deal of mankind) "who under-

* Gilbert found among his father's papers a certificate of the minister of his native parish, testifying that "the bearer, William Burnes, had no hand in the late wicked rebellion."

† Letter of Burns to Dr Moore, 22d August 1787.

stout men, their manners, and their ways, equal to my father." He was a strictly religious man. There exists in his handwriting a little manual of theology, in the form of a dialogue, which he drew up for the use of his children, and from which it appears that he had adopted more of the Arminian than of the Calvinistic doctrine; a circumstance not to be wondered at, when we consider that he had been educated in a district which was never numbered among the strongholds of the Presbyterian church. The affectionate reverence with which his children ever regarded him, is attested by all who have described him as he appeared in his domestic circle; but there needs no evidence beside that of the poet himself, who has painted, in colours that will never fade, "the saint, the father, and the husband," of *the Cottar's Saturday Night*.

Agnes Brown, the wife of this good man, is described as "a very sagacious woman, without any appearance of forwardness, or awkwardness of manner;"* and it seems that, in features, and, as he grew up, in general address, the poet resembled her more than his father.† She had an inexhaustible store of ballads and traditionary tales, and appears to have nourished his infant imagination by this means, while her husband paid more attention to "the weightier matters of the law."

These worthy people laboured hard for the support of an increasing family. William was occupied with Mr Ferguson's service, and Agnes,—like the wyfe of Auchtermuchtie, who ruled

"Baith calvis and kye,
And a' the house baith in and out,"—

* Letter of Mr Mackenzie, surgeon at Irvine. Morrison, vol. ii. p. 261.

† Ibid.

contrived to manage a small dairy as well as her children. But though their honesty and diligence merited better things, their condition continued to be very uncomfortable; and our poet (in his letter to Dr Moore) accounts distinctly for his being born and bred "a very poor man's son," by the remark, that "stubborn ungainly integrity, and headlong ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances."

These defects of temper did not, however, obscure the sterling worth of William Burnes in the eyes of Mr Ferguson; who, when his gardener expressed a wish to try his fortune on a farm of his then vacant, and confessed at the same time his inability to meet the charges of stocking it, at once advanced 100*l.* towards the removal of the difficulty. Burnes accordingly removed to this farm (that of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr) at Whitsuntide 1766, when his eldest son was between six and seven years of age. But the soil proved to be of the most ungrateful description; and Mr Ferguson dying, and his affairs falling into the hands of a harsh *factor*, (who afterwards sat for his picture in the *Two Dogs*,) Burnes was glad to give up his bargain at the end of six years. He then removed about ten miles to a larger and better farm, that of Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton. But here, after a short interval of prosperity, some unfortunate misunderstanding took place as to the conditions of the lease; the dispute was referred to arbitration; and, after three years of suspense, the result involved Burnes in ruin. The worthy man lived to know of this *decision*; but death saved him from witnessing its *necessary* consequences. He died of consumption on the 13th February 1784. Severe labour, and

hopes only renewed to be baffled, had at last exhausted a robust but irritable structure and temperament of body and of mind.

In the midst of the harassing struggles which found this termination, William Burnes appears to have used his utmost exertions for promoting the mental improvement of his children—a duty rarely neglected by Scottish parents, however humble their station, and scanty their means may be. Robert was sent, in his sixth year, to a small school at Alloway Miln, about a mile from the house in which he was born; but Campbell, the teacher, being in the course of a few months removed to another situation, Burnes and four or five of his neighbours engaged Mr John Murdoch to supply his place, lodging him by turns in their own houses, and ensuring to him a small payment of money quarterly. Robert Burns, and Gilbert his next brother, were the aptest and the favourite pupils of this worthy man, who survived till very lately, and who has, in a letter published at length by Currie, detailed, with honest pride, the part which he had in the early education of our poet. He became the frequent inmate and confidential friend of the family, and speaks with enthusiasm of the virtues of William Burnes, and of the peaceful and happy life of his humble abode.

“ He was (says Murdoch) a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in the path of virtue; not in driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore, when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproof was severely so: and a

stripe with the *tawz*, even on the skirt of the coat, gave heart-felt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

“ He had the art of gaining the esteem and good-will of those that were labourers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice : the one time it was with the foreman of the band, for not reaping the field as he was desired ; and the other time, it was with an old man, for using smutty inuendos and *double entendres*.”——

“ In this mean cottage, of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any place in Europe. The *Cottar's Saturday Night* will give some idea of the temper and manners that prevailed there.”

The boys, under the joint tuition of Murdoch and their father, made rapid progress in reading, spelling, and writing ; they committed psalms and hymns to memory with extraordinary ease—the teacher taking care (as he tell us) that they should understand the exact meaning of each word in the sentence ere they tried to get it by heart. “ As soon,” * says he, “ as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order ; sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words ; and to supply all the ellipses. Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. The books most commonly used in the school were the *Spelling Book*, the *New Testament*, the *Bible*, *Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse*, and *Fisher's English Grammar*.”——“ Gilbert always appeared to me to

possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit, than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church-music. Here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull; and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, *Mirth, with thee I mean to live*; and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys, had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the Muses, he would never have guessed that *Robert* had a propensity of that kind."

"At those years," says the poet himself, in 1787, "I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say ~~idiot~~ piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery.* This cultivated the latent seeds

* Mr Robert Chambers tells me that this woman's name was Jenny Wilson, and that she outlived Burns, with whom she was a great favourite.

of poetry ; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places ; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, *How are thy servants blest, O Lord !* I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear—

‘ For though on dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave—’

I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection*, one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were, *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*.^{*} Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier ; while the story of Wallace poured a tide of Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.” †

And speaking of the same period and books to Mrs Dunlop, he says, “ for several of my earlier years I had few other authors ; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the labori-

^{*} *The Hannibal* was lent by Mr Murdoch ; the *Wallace* by a neighbouring blacksmith.

† Letter to Dr Moore, 1787.

our' vocations 'of the idly, to shed a tear over
 those glorious but unfortunate stories. In those
 happy days I remember in particular being struck
 with that part of Wallace's story where these
 lines occur—

"Syns to the Logan wood, when it was late,
 To make a silent and a safe retreat."

"I chose a fine summer day, the only day my
 time of life allowed, and walked half a dozen
 miles to pay my respects to the Logan wood,
 with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim
 did to Loretto; and explored every den and dell
 where I could suppose my heroic countryman to
 have lodged."

Murdoch continued his instructions until the
 family had been about two years at Mount Oli-
 phant—when he left for a time that part of the
 country. "There being no school near us," says
 Gilbert Burns, "and our little services being al-
 ready useful on the farm, my father undertook to
 teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings by can-
 dle light—and in this way my two elder sisters
 received all the education they ever received."

Gilbert tells an anecdote which must not be
 omitted here, since it furnishes an early instance
 of the liveliness of his brother's imagination. Mur-
 doch, being on a visit to the family, read aloud
 one evening part of the tragedy of Titus Androni-
 cus—the circle listened with the deepest interest
 until he came to Act 2, sc. 5, where Lavinia is in-
 troduced "with her hands cut off, and her tongue
 cut out." At this the children entreated, with
 one voice, in an agony of distress, that their friend
 would read no more. "If ye will not hear the
 play out," said William Burns, "it need not be

left with you.”—“ If it be left,” cries Robert, “ I will burn it.” His father was about to chide him for this return to Murdoch’s kindness—but the good young man interfered, saying he liked to see so much sensibility, and left *The School for Love* in place of his truculent tragedy. At this time Robert was nine years of age.

“ Nothing,” continues Gilbert Burns, “ could be more retired than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant; we rarely saw anybody but the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age, or near it, in the neighbourhood. Indeed the greatest part of the land in the vicinity was at that time possessed by shopkeepers, and people of that stamp, who had retired from business, or who kept their farm in the country, at the same time that they followed business in town. My father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits. He borrowed *Salmon’s Geographical Grammar* for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book-society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of *Derham’s Physico* and *Astro-Theology*, and *Ray’s Wisdom of God in the Creation*, to give us some idea of astronomy and natural history. Robert read all these books with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to *Stackhouse’s History of the Bible*. From this Robert collected a competent know-

ledge of ancient history ; for *no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches.*" A collection of letters by eminent English authors, is mentioned as having fallen into Burns's hands much about the same time, and greatly delighted him.

When Burns was about thirteen or fourteen years old, his father sent him and Gilbert " week about, during a summer quarter," to the parish school of Dalrymple, two or three miles distant from Mount Oliphant, for the improvement of their penmanship. The good man could not pay two fees ; or his two boys could not be spared at the same time from the labour of the farm !

" We lived very poorly," says the poet. " I was a dexterous ploughman for my age ; and the next eldest to me was a brother, (Gilbert,) who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I. My indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent letters, which used to set us all in tears."

Gilbert Burns gives his brother's situation at this period in greater detail—" To the buffetings of misfortune," says he, " we could only oppose hard labour and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in thrashing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years,

under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old, (for he was now above fifty,) broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances, these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull head-ach, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed, in the night-time."

The year after this, Burns was able to gain three weeks of respite, one before, and two after the harvest, from the labours which were thus straining his youthful strength. His tutor Murdoch was now established in the town of Ayr, and the boy spent one of these weeks in revising the English grammar with him; the other two were given to French. He laboured enthusiastically in the new pursuit, and came home at the end of a fortnight with a dictionary and a *Telemaque*, of which he made such use at his leisure hours, by himself, that in a short time (if we may believe Gilbert) he was able to understand any ordinary book of French prose. His progress, whatever it really amounted to, was looked on as something of a prodigy; and a writing-master in Ayr, a friend of Murdoch, insisted that Robert Burns must next attempt the rudiments of the Latin tongue. He did so, but with little perseverance, we may be sure, since the results were of no sort of value.

Burns's Latin consisted of a few scraps of hackneyed quotation, such as many that never looked into Ruddiman's *Rudiments* can apply, on occasion, quite as skilfully as he ever appears to have done. The matter is one of no importance; we might perhaps safely dismiss it with parodying what Ben Jonson said of Shakspeare; he had little French, and no Latin; and yet it is proper to mention, that he is found, years after he left Ayrshire, writing to Edinburgh in some anxiety about a copy of *Moliere*.

He had read, however, and read well, ere his sixteenth year elapsed, no contemptible amount of the literature of his own country. In addition to the books which have already been mentioned, he tells us that, ere the family quitted Mount Oliphant, he had read "the *Spectator*, some plays of Shakspeare, Pope, (the *Homer* included,) Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, Locke on the Human Understanding, Justice's *British Gardener's Directory*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, Harvey's *Meditations*," (a book which has ever been very popular among the Scottish peasantry,) "and the Works of Allan Ramsay;" and Gilbert adds to this list *Pamela*, (the first novel either of the brothers read,) two stray volumes of *Peregrine Pickle*, two of *Count Fathom*, and a single volume of "some English historian," containing the reigns of James I., and his son. The "Collection of Songs," says Burns,* "was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noticing the true, tender, or sublime, from

* Letter to Dr Moore, 1787.

affectation or fustian ; and I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is."

He derived, during this period, considerable advantages from the vicinity of Mount Oliphant to the town of Ayr—a place then, and still, distinguished by the residence of many respectable gentlemen's families, and a consequent elegance of society and manners, not common in remote provincial situations. To his friend, Mr Murdoch, he no doubt owed, in the first instance, whatever attentions he received there from people older as well as higher than himself: some such persons appear to have taken a pleasure in lending him books, and surely no kindness could have been more useful to him than this. As for his coevals, he himself says, very justly, "It is not commonly at that green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the distance between them and their ragged playfellows. *My* young superiors," he proceeds, "never insulted the *clouterly* appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books: among them, even then, I could pick up some observation; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the Munny * Begum scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these, my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction,—but I was soon called to more serious evils."—(Letter to Moore.) The condition of the family during the last two years of their residence at Mount Oliphant, when

* The allusion here is to one of the sons of Dr John Malcolm, afterwards highly distinguished in the service of the East India Company.

the struggle which ended in their removal was rapidly approaching its crisis, has been already described; nor need we dwell again on the untimely burden of sorrow, as well as toil, which fell to the share of the youthful poet, and which would have broken altogether any mind wherein feelings like his had existed, without strength like his to control them.

The removal of the family to Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, took place when Burns was in his sixteenth year. He had some time before this made his first attempt in verse, and the occasion is thus described by himself in his letter to Moore.

"This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of Rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a *bonnie, sweet, son-sie lass*. In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion, I cannot tell: you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from

our labours ; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp ; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly ; and it was her favourite reel, to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin ; but my girl sung a song, which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love ; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he ; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

“ Thus with me began love and poetry ; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment.”

The earliest of the poet's productions is the little ballad,

“ O once I loved a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still,
And whilst that honour warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Nell,” &c.

Burns himself characterises it as “ a very puerile and silly performance ;” yet it contains here and there lines of which he need hardly have been ashamed at any period of his life :—

“ She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.”

“ Silly and puerile as it is,” said the poet, long afterwards, “ I am always pleased with this song, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue sincere. . . I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies, at the remembrance.” (MS. Memorandum book, August 1783.)

In his first epistle to Lapraik (1785) he says—

“ Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
 Tho’ rude and rough ;
*Yet crooning to a body’s sell
 Does weel eneugh.*”

And in some nobler verses, entitled “ On my Early Days,” we have the following passage :—

“ I mind it weel in early date,
When I was beardless, young and blate,
 And first could thrash the barn,
Or haud a yokin’ o’ the pleugh,
*An’ tho’ forfoughten sair eneugh,
 Yet unco proud to learn—
When first amang the yellow corn
 A man I reckoned was,
An’ wi’ the lave ilk merry morn
 Could rank my rig and lass—
Still shearing and clearing
 The tither stookit raw,
Wi’ claivers and haivers
 Wearing the day awa—
E’en then a wish, I mind its power,
A wish that to my latest hour
 Shall strongly heave my breast :
That I for poor auld Scotland’s sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
 Or sing a sang, at least :
The rough bur-thistle spreading wide
 Amang the bearded bear,
I turn’d the weeder-clips aside,
 And spared the symbol dear.”*

He is hardly to be envied who can contemplate without emotion, this exquisite picture of young nature and young genius. It was amidst such scenes that this extraordinary being felt those first indefinite stirrings of immortal ambition, which he has himself shadowed out under the magnificent image of "the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops, around the walls of his cave." *

* Letter to Dr Moore.

CHAPTER II.

"O enviable early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care and guilt unknown!
How ill exchanged for riper times,
To feel the follies or the crimes
Of others—or my own!"

As has been already mentioned, William Burnes now quitted Mount Oliphant for Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, where, for some little space, fortune appeared to smile on his industry and frugality. Robert and Gilbert were employed by their father as regular labourers—he allowing them 7*l.* of wages each *per annum*; from which sum, however, the value of any home-made clothes received by the youths was exactly deducted. Robert Burns's person, inured to daily toil, and continually exposed to every variety of weather, presented, before the usual time, every characteristic of robust and vigorous manhood. He says himself, that he never feared a competitor in any species of rural exertion; and Gilbert Burns, a man of uncommon bodily strength, adds, that neither he, nor any labourer he ever saw at work, was equal to the youthful poet, either in the corn field, or the severer tasks of the thrashing-floor. Gilbert says, that Robert's literary zeal slackened considerably after their removal to Tarbolton. He was separated from his acquaintances of the town of Ayr, and probably missed not only

the stimulus of their conversation, but the kindness that had furnished him with his supply, such as it was, of books. But the main source of his change of habits about this period was, it is confessed on all hands, the precocious fervour of one of his own turbulent passions.

“In my seventeenth year,” says Burns, “to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school.—My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years.* I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o’-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained

* “I wonder,” says Gilbert, “how Robert could attribute to our father that lasting resentment of his going to a dancing-school against his will, of which he was incapable. I believe the truth was, that about this time he began to see the dangerous impetuosity of my brother’s passions, as well as his not being amenable to counsel, which often irritated my father, and which he would naturally think a dancing-school was not likely to correct. But he was proud of Robert’s genius, which he bestowed more expense on cultivating than on the rest of the family—and he was equally delighted with his warmth of heart, and conversational powers. He had indeed that dislike of dancing-schools which Robert mentions; but so far overcame it during Robert’s first month of attendance, that he permitted the rest of the family that were fit for it, to accompany him during the second month. Robert excelled in dancing, and was for some time distractedly fond of it.”

piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of Fortune, were the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I could never squeeze myself into it ;—the last I always hated ;—there was contamination in the very entrance ! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark ; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude ; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense ; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant pour l'adorable moitié du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other ; and as in every other warfare in this world, my fortune was various, sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance ; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure

without an assisting confident. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions, and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe."

In regard to the same critical period of Burns's life, his excellent brother writes as follows:—"The seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish (extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age) were not marked by much literary improvement; but, during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though, when young, he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he *fainted, sunk, and died away*; but the agitations of his mind and body exceeded anything of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination;

and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivator, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her. One generally reigned paramount in his affections; but as Yorick's affections flowed out toward Madame de L— at the remise door, while the eternal vows of Elisa were upon him, so Robert was frequently encountering other attractions, which formed so many under-plots in the drama of his love."

Thus occupied with labour, love, and dancing, the youth "without an aim" found leisure occasionally to clothe the sufficiently various moods of his mind in rhymes. It was as early as seventeen, (he tells us,)* that he wrote some stanzas which begin beautifully:

" I dream'd I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam;
Listening to the wild birds singing,
By a falling crystal stream.
Straight the sky grew black and daring,
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave,
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling *drumlie* wave.
Such was life's deceitful morning," &c.

On comparing these verses with those on "Handsome Nell," the advance achieved by the young bard in the course of two short years, must be regarded with admiration; nor should a minor circumstance be entirely overlooked, that in the piece which we have just been quoting, their occurs but one Scotch word. It was about this time, also, that he wrote a ballad of much less ambitious vein, which, years after, he says, he used to con-

* *Reliques*, p. 242.

over with delight, because of the faithfulness with which it recalled to him the circumstances and feelings of his opening manhood.

—“ My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border,
And carefully he bred me up in decency and order.
He bade me act a manly part, tho’ I had ne’er a farthing ;
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth
regarding.

Then out into the world my course I did determine ;
*Tho’ to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charm-
ing ;*
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education ;
Resolved was I at least to try to mend my situation.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me ;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil, and labour to sustain me.
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me
early ;
For one, he said, to labour bred, was a match for fortune
fairly.

Thus all obscure, unknown and poor, thro’ life I’m doom-
ed to wander ;
Till down my weary bones I lay, in everlasting slumber.
No view, nor care, but shun whate’er might breed me
pain or sorrow ;
I live to-day, as well’s I may, regardless of to-morrow.”
&c.

These are the only two of his very early productions in which we have nothing expressly about love. The rest were composed to celebrate the charms of those rural beauties who followed each other in the dominion of his fancy—or shared the capacious throne between them ; and we may easily believe, that one who possessed, with his *other qualifications*, such powers of flattering, feared competitors as little in the diversions of his *evenings* as in the toils of his day.

The rural lover, in those districts, pursues his tender vocation in a style, the especial fascination of which town-bred swains may find it somewhat difficult to comprehend. After the labours of the day are over, nay, very often after he is supposed by the inmates of his own fireside to be in his bed, the happy youth thinks little of walking many long Scotch miles to the residence of his mistress, who, upon the signal of a tap at her window, comes forth to spend a soft hour or two beneath the harvest moon, or, if the weather be severe, (a circumstance which never prevents the journey from being accomplished,) amidst the sheaves of her father's barn. This "chappin' out," as they call it, is a custom of which parents commonly wink at, if they do not openly approve, the observance; and the consequences are far, very far, more frequently quite harmless, than persons not familiar with the peculiar manners and feelings of our peasantry may find it easy to believe. Excursions of this class form the theme of almost all the songs which Burns is known to have produced about this period,—and such of these juvenile performances as have been preserved, are, without exception, beautiful. They show how powerfully his boyish fancy had been affected by the old rural minstrelsy of his own country, and how easily his native taste caught the secret of its charm. The truth and simplicity of nature breathe in every line—the images are always just, often originally happy—and the growing refinement of his ear and judgment, may be traced in the terser language and more mellow flow of each successive ballad.

The best of the songs written at this time is that *beginning*,—

“ It was upon a Lammas night,
 When corn rigs are bonnie,
 Beneath the moon’s unclouded light,
 I held awa to Annie.
 The time flew by wi’ tentless heed,
 Till, ’tween the late and early,
 Wi’ sma’ persuasion she agreed
 To see me thro’ the barley,” &c.

We may let the poet carry on his own story.
 “ A circumstance,” says he,* “ which made some
 alteration on my mind and manners, was, that I
 spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast,
 a good distance from home, at a noted school,† to
 learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which
 I made a good progress. But I made a greater
 progress in the knowledge of mankind. The con-
 traband trade was at that time very successful, and
 it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those
 who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and
 roaring dissipation were till this time new to me ;
 but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though
 I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear
 in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high
 hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo,
 a month which is always a carnival in my bosom,
 when a charming *filette*, who lived next door to
 the school, upset my trigonometry, and set me
 off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I,
 however, struggled on with my *sines* and *co-sines*
 for a few days more ; but stepping into the garden
 one charming noon to take the sun’s altitude, there
 I met my angel, like

‘ Proserpine, gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower.’ —————

* Letter to Dr Moore.

† This was the school of Kirkoawald’s.

“ It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

“ I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly; I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

“ My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and M'Kenzie—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the

mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they found vent in rhyme ; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet."

Of the rhymes of those days, few, when he wrote his letter to Moore, had appeared in print.

Winter, a dirge, an admirably versified piece, is of their number ; *the Death of Poor Mailie, Mailie's Elegy*, and *John Barleycorn* ; and one charming song, inspired by the Nymph of Kirkoswald's, whose attractions put an end to his trigonometry.

" Now westlin winds, and slaughtering guns,
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather ;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather. . . .
—Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow ;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading green and yellow ;
Come let us stray our gladsome way," &c.

John Barleycorn is a clever old ballad, very cleverly new-modelled and extended ; but the *Death and Elegy of Poor Mailie* deserve more attention. The expiring animal's admonitions touching the education of the " poor toop lamb, her son and heir," and the " yowie, silly thing," her daughter, are from the same peculiar vein of sly homely wit, embedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the *Two Dogs*, and perhaps to its utmost depth, in his *Death and Doctor Hornbook*. It need scarcely be added, that Poor Mailie was a real personage, though she did not actually die until some time after her last words were written. She had been

purchased by Burns in a frolic, and became exceedingly attached to his person.

“ Thro’ all the town she trotted by him ;
A lang half-mile she could decry him ;
Wi’ kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi’ speed :
A friend mair faithfu’ ne’er came nigh him,
Than Mollie dead.”

These little pieces are in a much broader dialect than any of their predecessors. His merriment and satire were, from the beginning, Scotch.

Notwithstanding the luxurious tone of some of Burns's pieces produced in those times, we are assured by himself (and his brother unhesitatingly confirms the statement) that no positive vice mingled in any of his loves, until after he had reached his twenty-third year. He has already told us, that his short residence "away from home" at Kirkoswald's, where he mixed in the society of seafaring men and smugglers, produced an unfavourable alteration on some of his habits ; but in 1781-2 he spent six months at Irvine ; and it is from this period that his brother dates a serious change.

“As his numerous connexions,” says Gilbert, “were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty, (from which he never deviated till his twenty-third year,) he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he saw no probability of being master of for a great while. He and I had for several years taken land of our father, for the purpose of raising flax on our own account; and in the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as be-

ing suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax-raising."* Burns, accordingly, went to a half-brother of his mother's, by name Peacock, a flax-dresser in Irvine, with the view of learning this new trade, and for some time he applied himself diligently ; but misfortune after misfortune attended him. The shop accidentally caught fire during the carousal of a new-year's-day's morning, and Robert " was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence."—" I was obliged," says he, " to give up this scheme ; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head ; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption ; and, to crown my distresses, a *belle fille* whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification.† The finishing evil that brought up the rear

* David Sillar assured Mr Robert Chambers that this notion originated with William Burnes, who thought of becoming entirely a lint-farmer ; and, by way of keeping as much of the profits as he could within his family, of making his eldest son a flax-dresser.

† Some letters referring to this affair are omitted in the " General Correspondence" of Gilbert's edition ; for what reason I know not. They are surely as well worth preserving as many in the Collection, particularly when their early date is considered. The first of them begins thus :—" I verily believe, my dear E., that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. This, I hope, will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean their being written in such a serious manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often *afraid lest you should take me for some zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister.* I don't know how it is, my dear ; for though, *except your company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me thou*

of this infernal file, was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—*Depart from me, ye cursed.*" The following letter, addressed by Burns to his father, three days before the unfortunate fire took place, will show abundantly that the gloom of his spirits had little need of that aggravation. When we consider by whom, to whom, and under what circumstances, it was written, the letter is every way a remarkable one:—

giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought, that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity, kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy, which are but too apt to invest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathize with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the divine Disposer of Events, with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends to bestow on me, in bestowing you."

What follows is from Burns's Letter, in answer to that in which the young woman intimated her final rejection of his vows.—"I ought in good manners to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write to you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again; and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory; 'you were sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me' what, without you, I never can obtain, 'you wish me all kind of happiness.' It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am, that sharing life with you, would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I never can taste." In such excellent English did Burns woo his country maidens in at most his twentieth year.

“ HONoured SIR,

“ I HAVE purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-year's day ; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons, which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder ; and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity ; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are alightened, I *glimmer* a little into futurity ; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life ; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it ; and, if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

‘ The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.’

“ It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me *for all that this world has to offer.** As for this

* The verses of Scripture here alluded to, are as follows :—

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and

world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr and Mrs Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-year's-day, I shall conclude.

“ I am, honoured Sir, your dutiful son,

“ ROBERT BURNS.”

“ P. S.—My meal is nearly out; but I am going to borrow, till I get more.”

“ This letter,” says Dr Currie, “ written several years before the publication of his Poems, when his name was as obscure as his condition was humble, displays the philosophic melancholy which so generally forms the poetical temperament, and that buoyant and ambitious spirit which indicates

serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“ 16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“ 17. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

a mind conscious of its strength. At Irvine, Burns at this time possessed a single room for his lodgings, rented, perhaps, at the rate of a shilling a-week. He passed his days in constant labour as a flax-dresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oatmeal, sent to him from his father's family. The store of this humble, though wholesome nutriment, it appears, was nearly exhausted, and he was about to borrow till he should obtain a supply. Yet even in this situation, his active imagination had formed to itself pictures of eminence and distinction. His despair of making a figure in the world, shows how ardently he wished for honourable fame; and his contempt of life, founded on this despair, is the genuine expression of a youthful and generous mind. In such a state of reflection, and of suffering, the imagination of Burns naturally passed the dark boundaries of our earthly horizon, and rested on those beautiful representations of a better world, where there is neither thirst, nor hunger, nor sorrow, and where happiness shall be in proportion to the capacity of happiness."—*Life*, p. 102.

Unhappily for himself and for the world, it was not always in the recollections of his virtuous home and the study of his Bible, that Burns sought for consolation amidst the heavy distresses which "his youth was heir to." Irvine is a small sea-port; and here, as at Kirkoswald's, the adventurous spirits of a smuggling coast, with all their jovial habits, were to be met with in abundance. "He contracted some acquaintance," says Gilbert, "of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue, which had hitherto restrained him."

I owe to Mr Robert Chambers (author of Tra-

ditions of Edinburgh) the following note of a conversation which he had in June 1826, with a respectable old citizen of this town :—" Burns was, at the time of his residence among us, an older-looking man than might have been expected from his age—very darkly complexioned, with a strong dark eye—of a thoughtful appearance, amounting to what might be called a gloomy attentiveness ; so much so, that when in company which did not call forth his brilliant powers of conversation, he might often be seen, for a considerable space together, leaning down on his palm, with his elbow resting on his knee. He was in common silent and reserved ; but when he found a man to his mind, he constantly made a point of attaching himself to his company, and endeavouring to bring out his powers. It was among women alone that he uniformly exerted himself, and uniformly shone. People remarked even then, that when Robert Burns did speak, he always spoke to the point, and in general with a sententious brevity. His moody thoughtfulness, and laconic style of expression, were both inherited from his father, who, for his station in life, was a very singular person."

One of the most intimate companions of Burns, while he remained at Irvine, seems to have been that David Sillar, to whom the *Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet*, was subsequently addressed. Sillar was at this time a poor schoolmaster in Irvine, enjoying considerable reputation as a writer of local verses : and, according to all accounts, extremely jovial in his life and conversation.*

* If this person had some share in leading Burns into convivial dissipations, it is proper to observe, that his own conduct in after life made abundant atonement for that, and all his other early irregularities. Mr Sillar became --

Burns himself thus sums up the results of his residence at Irvine:—"From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood, taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set ashore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of everything.

. His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine; and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself, where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor—which hither-

the sequel much more remarkable for strict habits of abstemiousness, than his unfortunate friend ever in reality was for the reverse; and worldly prosperity having attended his industry in a very uncommon degree, he survived till lately (if he does not still survive) one of the most respectable, as well as wealthy, inhabitants of his native town. He published a volume of poems, in some of which considerable ingenuity is displayed; and often filled with much credit the situation of a borough magistrate.

to I had regarded with honour. *Here his friendship did me a mischief.*" Professor Walker, when preparing to write his Sketch of the Poet's life, was informed by an aged inhabitant of Irvine, that Burns's chief delight while there was in discussing religious topics, particularly in those circles which usually gather in a Scotch churchyard after service. The senior added, that Burns commonly took the high Calvinistic side in such debates; and concluded with a boast, that "the lad" was indebted to himself in a great measure for the gradual adoption of "more liberal opinions." It was during the same period, that the poet was first initiated in the mysteries of free masonry, "which was," says his brother, "his first introduction to the life of a boon companion." He was introduced to St Mary's Lodge of Tarbolton by John Ranken, a very dissipated man of considerable talents, to whom he afterwards indited a poetical epistle, which will be noticed in its place.

"Rhyme," Burns says, "I had given up;" (on going to Irvine;) "but meeting with Ferguson's *Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly sounding lyre with emulating vigour." Neither flax-dressing nor the tavern could keep him long from his proper vocation. But it was probably this accidental meeting with Ferguson, that in a great measure finally determined the *Scottish* character of Burns's poetry; and indeed, but for the lasting sense of this obligation, and some natural sympathy with the personal misfortunes of Ferguson's life, it would be difficult to account for the very high terms in which Burns always mentions his productions.

Shortly before Burns went to Irvine, he, his brother Gilbert, and some seven or eight young men besides, all of the parish of Tarbolton, had

formed themselves into a society, which they called the Bachelor's Club; and which met one evening in every month for the purposes of mutual entertainment and improvement. That their cups were but modestly filled is evident; for the rules of the club did not permit any member to spend more than threepence at a sitting. A question was announced for discussion at the close of each meeting; and at the next they came prepared to deliver their sentiments upon the subject-matter thus proposed. Burns drew up the regulations, and evidently was the principal person. He introduced his friend Sillar during his stay at Irvine, and the meetings appear to have continued as long as the family remained in Tarbolton. Of the sort of questions discussed, we may form some notion from the minute of one evening, still extant in Burns's hand-writing.—QUESTION FOR HALLOWEEN, (Nov. 11,) 1780.—“*Suppose a young man, bred a farmer, but without any fortune, has it in his power to marry either of two women, the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome in person, nor agreeable in conversation, but who can manage the household affairs of a farm well enough; the other of them a girl every way agreeable in person, conversation, and behaviour, but without any fortune: which of them shall he choose?*” Burns, as may be guessed, took the imprudent side in this discussion.

“On one solitary occasion,” says he, “we resolved to meet at Tarbolton in July, on the race-night, and have a dance in honour of our society. Accordingly, we did meet, each one with a partner, and spent the evening in such innocence and merriment, such cheerfulness and good humour, that every brother will long remember it with delight.”

There can be no doubt that Burns would not have patronized this sober association so long, unless he had experienced at its assemblies the pleasure of a stimulated mind; and as little, that to the habit of arranging his thoughts, and expressing them in somewhat of a formal shape, thus early cultivated, we ought to attribute much of that conversational skill which, when he first mingled with the upper world, was generally considered as the most remarkable of all his personal accomplishments.—Burns's associates of the Bachelor's Club, must have been young men possessed of talents and acquirements, otherwise such minds as his and Gilbert's could not have persisted in measuring themselves against theirs; and we may believe that the periodical display of the poet's own vigour and resources, at these club-meetings, and (more frequently than his brother approved) at the Free Mason Lodges of Irvine and Tarbolton, extended his rural reputation; and, by degrees, prepared persons not immediately included in his own circle, for the extraordinary impression which his poetical efforts were ere long to create all over "the Carrick border."

Mr David Sillar gives an account of the beginning of his own acquaintance with Burns, and introduction into this Bachelor's Club, which will always be read with much interest.—"Mr Robert Burns was some time in the parish of Tarbolton prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily procured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with its kindred attendant, suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe,

he had a great deal to say for himself, and that they suspected his principles. He wore the only tied hair in the parish: and in the church, his plaid, which was of a particular colour, I think fillemot, he wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders. These surmises, and his exterior, had such a magnetical influence on my curiosity, as made me particularly solicitous of his acquaintance. Whether my acquaintance with Gilbert was casual or premeditated, I am not now certain. By him I was introduced, not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where, in a short time, I became a frequent, and I believe, not unwelcome visitant. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the bard, we frequently met upon Sundays at church, when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or lasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have frequently been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex; and many times, when I have been bashfully anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance. Some of the few opportunities of a noon-tide walk that a country life allows her laborious sons, he spent on the banks of the river, or in the woods, in the neighbourhood of Stair, a situation peculiarly adapted to the genius of a rural bard. Some book (generally one of those mentioned in his letter to Mr Murdoch) he always carried and read, when not otherwise employed. It was likewise his custom to read at table. In one of my visits to Lochlea, in time of a sowed supper, he was so intent on reading, I think *Tristram Shandy*,

that his spoon falling out of his hand, made him exclaim, in a tone scarcely imitable, ‘ Alas, poor Yorick !’ Such was Burns, and such were his associates, when, in May 1781, I was admitted a member of the Bachelor’s Club.”—*Letter to Mr Aiken of Ayr, in Morrison’s Burns*, vol. ii. pp. 257–260.

The misfortunes of William Burnes thickened apace, as has already been seen, and were approaching their crisis at the time when Robert came home from his flax-dressing experiment at Irvine. The good old man died soon after ; and among other evils which he thus escaped, was an affliction that would, in his eyes, have been severe. The poet had not, as he confesses, come unscathed out of the society of those persons of “ liberal opinions” with whom he consorted in Irvine ; and he expressly attributes to their lessons, the scrape into which he fell soon after “ he put his hand to plough again.” He was compelled, according to the then all but universal custom of rural parishes in Scotland, to do penance in church, before the congregation, in consequence of the birth of an illegitimate child ; and whatever may be thought of the propriety of such exhibitions, there can be no difference of opinion as to the culpable levity with which he describes the nature of his offence, and the still more reprehensible bitterness with which, in his Epistle to Ranken,* he inveighs

* There is much humour in some of the verses ; as,

“ ’Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi’ my gun,
An’ brought a paitrick to the grun’,
A bonnie hen,
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken,” &c.

against the clergyman, who, in rebuking him, only performed what was then a regular part of the clerical duty, and a part of it that could never have been at all agreeable to the worthy man whom he satirizes under the appellation of "Daddie Auld."

The Poet's Welcome to an Illegitimate Child was composed on the same occasion—a piece in which some very manly feelings are expressed, along with others which it can give no one pleasure to contemplate. There is a song in honour of the same occasion, or a similar one about the same period, *The rantin' Dog the Daddie o't*,—which exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying in his shame.

When I consider his tender affection for the surviving members of his own family, and the reverence with which he ever regarded the memory of the father whom he had so recently buried, I cannot believe that Burns has thought fit to record in verse all the feelings which this exposure excited in his bosom. "To wave (in his own language) the quantum of the sin," he who, two years afterwards, wrote the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, had not, we may be sure, hardened his heart to the thought of bringing additional sorrow and unexpected shame to the fireside of a widowed mother. But his false pride recoiled from letting his jovial associates guess how little he was able to drown the whispers of *the still small voice*; and the fermenting bitterness of a mind ill at ease within itself, escaped (as may be too often traced in the history of satirists) in the shape of angry sarcasms against others, who, whatever their private errors *might be*, had at least done him no wrong.

It is impossible not to smile at one item of con-

solation which Burns proposes to himself on this occasion :—

“—— The mair they talk, *I'm kend the better ;*
E'en let them clash !”

This is indeed a singular manifestation of “ the last infirmity of noble minds.”

CHAPTER III.

“ The star that rules my luckless lot
 Has fated me the russet coat,
 And damn'd my fortune to the great;
 But in requit,
 Has bless'd me wi' a random shot
 O' country wit.”

THREE months before the death of William Burnes, Robert and Gilbert took the farm of Moss-giel,* in the neighbouring parish of Mauchline, with the view of providing a shelter for their parents in the storm, which they had seen gradually thickening, and knew must soon burst; and to this place the whole family removed on William's death. “ It was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family, (says Gilbert,) and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was L.7 per annum each. And during the whole time this family concern lasted, which was four years, as well as during the preceding period at Lochlea, Robert's expenses never, in any one year, exceeded his slender income.”

“ I entered on this farm,” says the poet,† “ with a full resolution, *come, go, I will be wise*. I read farming books, I calculated crops, I attended mar-

* The farm consisted of 119 acres, and the rent was L.90.

† Letter to Dr Moore.

lets; and, in short, in spite of the *devil, and the world, and the flesh*, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This upset all my wisdom, and I returned, *like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*"

"At the time that our poet took the resolution of becoming wise, he procured," says Gilbert, "a little book of blank paper, with the purpose, expressed on the first page, of making farming memorandums. These *farming memorandums* are curious enough," Gilbert slyly adds, "and a specimen may gratify the reader."—Specimens accordingly he gives; as,

"O why the dence should I repine,
And be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five-foot nine,—
I'll go and be a sodger," &c.

"O leave novells, ye Mauchline belles,
Ye're safer at your spinning wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks
For rakish rooks—like Rob Mossiel.
Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
They make your youthful fancies reel,
They heat your veins, and fire your brains,
And then ye're prey for Rob Mossiel," &c. &c.

The four years during which Burns resided on this cold and ungrateful farm of Mossiel, were the most important of his life. It was then that his genius developed its highest energies; on the works produced in these years his fame was first established, and must ever continue mainly to rest: it was then also that his personal character came out in all its brightest lights, and in all but its darkest shadows; and indeed from the commence-

ment of this period, the history of the man may be traced, step by step, in his own immortal writings.

Burns now began to know that nature had meant him for a poet; and diligently, though as yet in secret, he laboured in what he felt to be his destined vocation. Gilbert continued for some time to be his chief, often indeed his only confident; and anything more interesting and delightful than this excellent man's account of the manner in which the poems included in the first of his brother's publications were composed, is certainly not to be found in the annals of literary history.

The reader has already seen, that long before the earliest of them was known beyond the domestic circle, the strength of Burns's understanding, and the keenness of his wit, as displayed in his ordinary conversation, and more particularly at masonic meetings and debating clubs, (of which he formed one in Mauchline, on the Tarbolton model, immediately on his removal to Mossgiel,) had made his name known to some considerable extent in the country about Tarbolton, Mauchline, and Irvine; and this prepared the way for his poetry. Professor Walker gives an anecdote on this head, which must not be omitted. Burns already numbered several clergymen among his acquaintances: indeed, we know from himself, that at this period he was not a little flattered, and justly so, no question, with being permitted to mingle occasionally in their society.* One of these gentlemen told the Professor, that after entering on the clerical profession, he had repeatedly met Burns in company, "where," said he, "the acuteness and

* Letter to Dr Moore, sub initio.

originality displayed by him, the depth of his discernment, the force of his expressions, and the authoritative energy of his understanding, had created a sense of his power, of the extent of which I was unconscious, till it was revealed to me by accident. On the occasion of my second appearance in the pulpit, I came with an assured and tranquil mind, and though a few persons of education were present, advanced some length in the service with my confidence and self-possession unimpaired; but when I saw Burns, who was of a different parish, unexpectedly enter the church, I was affected with a tremor and embarrassment, which suddenly apprised me of the impression which my mind, unknown to itself, had previously received." The Professor adds, that the person who had thus unconsciously been measuring the stature of the intellectual giant, was not only a man of good talents and education, but "remarkable for a more than ordinary portion of constitutional firmness."*

Every Scotch peasant who makes any pretension to understanding, is a theological critic—at least such *was* the case—and Burns, no doubt, had long ere this time distinguished himself considerably among those hard-headed groups that may usually be seen gathered together in the churchyard after the sermon is over. It may be guessed that from the time of his residence at Irving, his strictures were too often delivered in no reverend vein. "Polemical divinity," says he to Dr Moore, in 1787, "about this time, was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation-parties on Sundays, at funerals, &c. used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indis-

* *Life prefixed to Morrison's Burns*, p. 45.

cretion, that I raised a hue-and-cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour." There are some plain allusions to this matter in Mr David Sillar's letter, already quoted, and a surviving friend told Allan Cunningham, the other day, "that he first saw Burns on the afternoon of the Monday of a Mauchline Sacrament, lounging on horseback at the door of a public house, holding forth on religious topics to a whole crowd of country people, who presently became so much shocked with his levities, that they fairly hissed him from the ground."

To understand Burns's situation at this time, at once patronized by a number of clergymen, and attended with "a hue-and-cry of heresy," we must remember his own words, "that polemical divinity was putting the country half mad." Of both the two parties which, ever since the revolution of 1688, have pretty equally divided the Church of Scotland, it so happened that some of the most zealous and conspicuous leaders and partizans were thus opposed to each other, in constant warfare, in this particular district; and their feuds being of course taken up among their congregations, and spleen and prejudice at work, even more furiously in the cottage than in *the manse*, he who, to the annoyance of the one set of belligerents, could talk like Burns, might count pretty surely, with whatever alloy his wit happened to be mingled, in whatever shape the precious "circulating medium" might be cast, on the applause and countenance of the enemy. And it is needless to add, they were the less scrupulous sect of the two that *enjoyed the co-operation*, such as it was then, and *far more important*, as in the sequel it came to be, *of our poet*.

William Burnes, as we have already seen, though a most exemplary and devout man, entertained opinions very different from those which commonly obtained among the rigid Calvinists of his district. The worthy and pious old man himself, therefore, had not improbably infused into his son's mind its first prejudice against these persons; though, had he lived to witness the manner in which Robert assailed them, there can be no doubt his sorrow would have equalled their anger. The jovial spirits with whom Burns associated at Irvine, and afterwards, were of course habitual deriders of the manners, as well as the tenets of the

“Orthodox, orthodox, wha believe in John Knox.”

We have already observed the effect of the young poet's own first collision with the ruling powers of presbyterian discipline; but it was in the very act of settling at Mossgiel that Burns formed the connexion, which, more than any circumstance besides, influenced him as to the matter now in question. The farm belonged to the estate of the Earl of Loudoun, but the brothers held it on a sub-lease from Mr Gavin Hamilton, writer (*i. e.* attorney) in Mauchline, a man, by every account, of engaging manners, open, kind, generous, and high-spirited, between whom and Robert Burns, in spite of considerable inequality of condition, a close and intimate friendship was ere long formed. Just about this time it happened that Hamilton was at open feud with Mr Auld, the minister of Mauchline, (the same who had already *rebuked* the poet,) and the ruling elders of the parish, in consequence of certain irregularities in his personal *conduct and deportment*, which, according to the *usual strict notions* of kirk discipline, were consi

dered as fairly demanding the vigorous interference of these authorities. The notice of this person, his own landlord, and, as it would seem, one of the principal inhabitants of the village of Mauchline at the time, must, of course, have been very flattering to our polemical young farmer. He espoused Gavin Hamilton's quarrel warmly. Hamilton was naturally enough disposed to mix up his personal affair with the standing controversies whereon Auld was at variance with a large and powerful body of his brother clergymen ; and by degrees Mr Hamilton's ardent *protegé* came to be as vehemently interested in the church politics of Ayrshire, as he could have been in politics of another order, had he happened to be a freeman of some open borough, and his patron a candidate for the honour of representing it in St Stephen's.

Mr Cromek has been severely criticised for some details of Mr Gavin Hamilton's dissensions with his parish minister ;* but perhaps it might have been well to limit the censure to the tone and spirit of the narrative,† since there is no doubt that these petty squabbles had a large share in directing the early energies of Burns's poetical talents. Even in the west of Scotland, such matters would hardly excite much notice now-a-days, but they were quite enough to produce a world of vexation and controversy forty years ago ; and the English reader to whom all such details are denied, will certainly never be able to comprehend either the merits or the demerits of many of Burns's most remarkable productions. Since I have touched on this matter at all, I may as well add, that Hamilton's family, though professedly adhering (as, in-

* *Edinburgh Review*, vol. XIII. p. 273.

† *Reliques*, p. 164, &c.

deed, if they were to be Christians at all in that district, they must needs have done) to the Presbyterian Establishment, had always lain under a strong suspicion of Episcopalianism. Gavin's grandfather had been curate of Kirkoswald's in the troubled times that preceded the Revolution, and incurred great and lasting popular hatred, in consequence of being supposed to have had a principal hand in bringing a thousand of *the Highland host* into that region in 1677-8. The district was commonly said not to have entirely recovered the effects of that savage visitation in less than a hundred years; and the descendants and representatives of the Covenanters, whom the curate of Kirkoswald's had the reputation at least of persecuting, were commonly supposed to regard with anything rather than ready good-will, his grandson, the witty writer of Mauchline. A well-nursed prejudice of this kind was likely enough to be met by counter-spleen, and such seems to have been the truth of the case. The lapse of another generation has sufficed to wipe out every trace of feuds, that were still abundantly discernible, in the days when Ayrshire first began to ring with the equally zealous applause and vituperation of,—

“ Poet Burns,
And his priest-skelping turns.”

It is impossible to look back now to the civil war, which then raged among the churchmen of the west of Scotland, without confessing, that on either side there was much to regret, and not a little to blame. Proud and haughty spirits were unfortunately opposed to each other; and in the superabundant display of zeal as to doctrinal points, *neither party seems to have mingled much of the charity of the Christian temper.* The whole exhi-

bition was most unlovely—the spectacle of such indecent violence among the leading Ecclesiastics of the district, acted most unfavourably on many men's minds—and no one can doubt, that in the at best unsettled state of Robert Burns's principles, the unhappy effect must have been powerful indeed as to him.

Macgill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of original sin, and even of the Trinity; and the former at length published an Essay, which was considered as demanding the notice of the Church-courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this; and at last Dr Macgill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his own congregation from the pulpit—which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took, for the most part, the side of Macgill, who was a man of cold unpopular manners, but of unrepached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused, with far more fervid zeal, the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were of course on the side of Macgill—Auld, and the Mauchline elders, with his enemies. Mr Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of *Macgill's* cause before the Presbytery, and, I believe, also before the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about

this time formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened into a warm friendship, with Burns. Burns, therefore, was from the beginning a zealous, as in the end he was perhaps the most effective partizan, of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation. Macgill, Dalrymple, and their brethren, suspected, with more or less justice, of leaning to heterodox opinions, are the *New Light* pastors of his earliest satires.

The prominent antagonists of these men, and chosen champions of the *Auld Light*, in Ayrshire, it must now be admitted on all hands, presented, in many particulars of personal conduct and demeanour, as broad a mark as ever tempted the shafts of a satirist. These men prided themselves on being the legitimate and undegenerate descendants and representatives of the haughty Puritans, who chiefly conducted the overthrow of Popery in Scotland, and who ruled for a time, and would fain have continued to rule, over both king and people, with a more tyrannical dominion than ever the Catholic priesthood itself had been able to exercise amidst that high-spirited nation. With the horrors of the Papal system for ever in their mouths, these men were in fact as bigoted monks, and almost as relentless inquisitors in their hearts, as ever wore cowl and cord—austere and ungracious of aspect, coarse and repulsive of address and manners—very Pharisees as to the lesser matters of the law, and many of them, to all outward appearance at least, overflowing with pharisaical self-conceit, as well as monastic bile. That admirable qualities lay concealed under this ungainly exterior, and mingled with and checked the worst of these gloomy passions, no candid man will permit himself to doubt or suspect for a moment ; and

that Burns has grossly overcharged his portraits of them, deepening shadows that were of themselves sufficiently dark, and excluding altogether those brighter, and perhaps softer, traits of character, which redeemed the originals within the sympathies of many of the worthiest and best of men, seems equally clear. Their bitterest enemies dared not at least to bring against them, even when the feud was at its height of fervour, charges of that heinous sort, which they fearlessly, and I fear justly, preferred against their antagonists. No one ever accused them of signing the Articles, administering the sacraments, and eating the bread of a Church, whose fundamental doctrines they disbelieved, and, by insinuation at least, disavowed.

The law of Church-patronage was another subject on which controversy ran high and furious in the district at the same period; the actual condition of things on this head being upheld by all the men of the New Light, and condemned as equally at variance with the precepts of the gospel, and the rights of freemen, by not a few of the other party, and, in particular, by certain conspicuous zealots in the immediate neighbourhood of Burns. While this warfare raged, there broke out an intestine discord within the camp of the faction which he loved not. Two of the foremost leaders of the Auld Light party quarrelled about a question of parish-boundaries; the matter was taken up in the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, and there, in the open court, to which the announcement of the discussion had drawn a multitude of the country people, and Burns among the rest, the reverend divines, hitherto sworn friends and associates, lost all command of temper, and abused each other *coram populo*, with a fiery virulence of personal invective,

such as has long been banished from all popular assemblies, wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten code.

“The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light,” says Burns, “was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my *Holy Fair*. I had a notion myself, that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a *roar of applause*.”

This was *The Holy Twilsie, or Two Herds*, a piece not given either by Currie or Gilbert Burns, though printed without scruple by the Rev. Hamilton Paul, and certainly omitted, for no very intelligible reason, in editions where *The Holy Fair*, *The Ordination*, &c. found admittance. The two *herds*, or pastors, were Mr Moodie, minister of Riccartoun, and that favourite victim of Burns's, John Russell, then minister at Kilmarnock, and afterwards of Stirling.

“From this time,” Burns says, “I began to be known in the country as a maker of rhymes. . . . *Holy Willie's Prayer* next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, and see if any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers”——: and to a place among profane rhymers, the author of this terrible infliction had unquestionably established his right. Sir Walter Scott speaks of it as “a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns ever afterwards wrote—but unfortunately cast in a form too

daringly profane to be received into Dr Currie's collection."* Burns's reverend editor, Mr Paul, nevertheless presents *Holy Willie's Prayer* at full length ; and even calls on the friends of religion to bless the memory of the poet who took such a judicious method of " leading the liberal mind to a rational view of the nature of prayer."

" This," says that bold commentator, " was not only the prayer of Holy Willie, but it is merely the metrical version of every prayer that is offered up by those who call themselves the pure reformed church of Scotland. In the course of his reading and polemical warfare, Burns embraced and defended the opinions of Taylor of Norwich, Macgill, and that school of Divines. He could not reconcile his mind to that picture of the Being, whose very essence is love, which is drawn by the high Calvinists or the representatives of the Covenanters—namely, that he is disposed to grant salvation to none but a few of their sect ; that the whole Pagan world, the disciples of Mahomet, the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and even the Calvinists who differ from them in certain tenets, must, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, descend to the pit of perdition, man, woman, and child, without the possibility of escape ; but such are the identical doctrines of the Cameronians of the present day, and such was Holy Willie's style of prayer. The hypocrisy and dishonesty of the man, who was at the time a reputed Saint, were perceived by the discerning penetration of Burns, and *to expose them he considered his duty*. The terrible view of the Deity exhibited in that able production is precisely *the same view* which is given of him, in different

words, by many devout preachers at present. They inculcate, that the greatest sinner is the greatest favourite of heaven—that a reformed bawd is more acceptable to the Almighty than a pure virgin, who has hardly ever transgressed even in thought—that the lost sheep alone will be saved, and that the ninety-and-nine out of the hundred will be left in the wilderness, to perish without mercy—that the Saviour of the world loves the elect, not from any lovely qualities which they possess, for they are hateful in his sight, but ‘he loves them because he loves them.’ Such are the sentiments which are breathed by those who are denominated High Calvinists, and from which the soul of a poet who loves mankind, and who has not studied the system in all its bearings, recoils with horror. . . . The gloomy forbidding representation which they give of the Supreme Being, has a tendency to produce insanity, and lead to suicide.”—*Life of Burns*, pp. 40—41.

The Reverend Hamilton Paul may be considered as expressing in the above, and in other passages of a similar tendency, the sentiments with which even the most audacious of Burns’s anti-calvinistic satires were received among the Ayrshire divines of the New Light; that performances so blasphemous should have been, not only pardoned, but applauded by ministers of religion, is a singular circumstance, which may go far to make the reader comprehend the exaggerated state of party feeling in Burns’s native county, at the period when he first appealed to the public ear: nor is it fair to pronounce sentence upon the young and reckless satirist, without taking into consideration the undeniable fact—that in his worst offences of this kind, he was encouraged and abetted by those,

who, to say nothing more about their professional character and authority, were almost the only persons of liberal education whose society he had any opportunity of approaching at the period in question. Had Burns received, at this time, from his clerical friends and patrons, such advice as was tendered, when rather too late, by a layman who was as far from bigotry on religious subjects as any man in the world, this great genius might have made his first approaches to the public notice in a very different character.

“ Let your bright talents,”—(thus wrote the excellent John Ramsay of Ochertyre, in October 1787,)—“ Let those bright talents which the Almighty has bestowed on you, be henceforth employed to the noble purpose of supporting the cause of truth and virtue. An imagination so varied and forcible as yours, may do this in many different modes ; nor is it necessary to be always serious, which you have been to good purpose ; good morals may be recommended in a comedy, or even in a song. Great allowances are due to the heat and inexperience of youth ;—and few poets can boast, like Thomson, of never having written a line, which, dying, they would wish to blot. In particular, I wish you to keep clear of the thorny walks of satire, which makes a man an hundred enemies for one friend, and is doubly dangerous when one is supposed to extend the slips and weaknesses of individuals to their sect or party. About modes of faith, serious and excellent men have always differed ; and there are certain curious questions, *which may afford scope to men of metaphysical heads, but seldom mend the heart or temper. Whilst these points are beyond human ken, it is*

sufficient that all our sects concur in their views of morals. You will forgive me for these hints."

Few such hints, it is likely, ever reached his ears in the days when they might have been most useful—days of which the principal honours and distinctions are thus alluded to by himself:—

"I've been at drunken writers' feasts;
Nay, been bitch-fou 'mang godly priests."

It is amusing to observe how soon even really Bucolic bards learn the tricks of their trade: Burns knew already what lustre a compliment gains from being set in sarcasm, when he made Willie call for special notice to

———"Gaun Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, and swears, and plays at cards;
Yet has sae mony takin' arts
 Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts
 He steals awa." &c.

Nor is his other patron, Aiken, introduced with inferior skill, as having merited Willie's most fervent execration by his "glib-tongued" defence of the heterodox doctor of Ayr:

"Lord! visit them wha did employ him,
And for thy people's sake destroy 'em."

Burns owed a compliment to this gentleman's elocutionary talents. "I never knew there was any merit in my poems," said he, "until Mr Aiken read them into repute."

Encouraged by the "roar of applause" which greeted these pieces, thus orally promulgated and recommended, he produced in succession various satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed; as *The Ordination*; *The Kirk's Alarm*, &c. &c.; and last, and best undoubtedly, *The Holy Fair*,

in which, unlike the others that have been mentioned, satire keeps its own place, and is subservient to the poetry of Burns. This was, indeed, an extraordinary performance ; no partizan of any sect could whisper that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, were held up to ridicule : it was acknowledged amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet ; and hardly denied by those who shook their heads the most gravely over the indiscretions of particular passages, or even by those who justly regretted a too prevailing tone of levity in the treatment of a subject essentially solemn, that the Muse of Christ's Kirk on the Green had awakened, after the slumber of ages, with all the vigour of her regal youth about her, in " the auld clay biggin " of Mossiel.

The Holy Fair, however, created admiration, not surprise, among the circle of domestic friends who had been admitted to watch the steps of his progress in an art of which, beyond that circle, little or nothing was heard until the youthful poet produced at length a satirical master-piece. It is not possible to reconcile the statements of Gilbert and others, as to some of the minutiae of the chronological history of Burns's previous performances ; but there can be no doubt, that although from choice or accident, his first provincial fame was that of a satirist, he had, some time before any of his philippics on the Auld Light divines made their appearance, exhibited to those who enjoyed his personal confidence, a range of imaginative power hardly inferior to what the *Holy Fair* itself displays ; and, at least, such a rapidly improving skill in poetical

language and versification, as must have prepared them for witnessing, without wonder, even the most perfect specimens of his art.

Gilbert says, that "among *the earliest* of his poems," was the *Epistle to Davie*, (i. e. Mr David Sillar,) and Mr Walker believes that this was written very soon after the death of William Burnes. This piece is in the very intricate and difficult measure of the Cherry and the Slae; and, on the whole, the poet moves with ease and grace in his very unnecessary trammels; but young poets are careless beforehand of difficulties which would startle the experienced; and great poets may overcome any difficulties if they once grapple with them; so that I should rather ground my distrust of Gilbert's statement, if it must be literally taken, on the celebration of *Jean*, with which the epistle terminates: and, after all, she is celebrated in the concluding stanzas, which may have been added some time after the first draught. The gloomy circumstances of the poet's personal condition, as described in this piece, were common, it cannot be doubted, to all the years of his youthful history; so that no particular date is to be founded upon these; and if this was the first, certainly it was not the last occasion, on which Burns exercised his fancy in the colouring of the very worst issue that could attend a life of unsuccessful toil. But Gilbert's recollections, however on trivial points inaccurate, will always be more interesting than anything that could be put in their place.

"Robert," says he, "often composed without any regular plan. When anything made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two

or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in summer 1784, when in the interval of harder labour, he and I were weeding in the garden, (kail-yard,) that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle (to Davie). I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scotch poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression—but here, there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed very well pleased with my criticism, and we talked of sending it to some magazine; but as this plan afforded no opportunity of knowing how it would take, the idea was dropped.

“It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family, (and I could yet point out the particular spot,) that the author first repeated to me the *Address to the Deil*. The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him, by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage. *Death and Doctor Hornbook*

though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. The school-master of Tarbolton parish, to eke up the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that "Advice would be given in common disorders at the shop gratis." Robert was at a mason-meeting in Tarbolton, when the *Dominie* unfortunately made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions, he mentions in his letter to Dr Moore, crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of the way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me. The *Epistle to John Lapraik* was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, *On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin'* (p. 235). I believe he has omitted the word *rocking* in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country-women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock, or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of going *a-rocking*, or *with the rock*. As the connexion the phrase had with the implement w

forgotten when the rock gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these *rockings* at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their *rocks*, that Lapraik's song, beginning—"When I upon thy bosom lean," * was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first epistle to Lapraik; and his second in reply to his answer. The verses to the *Mouse* and *Mountain Daisy* were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough; I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise. Several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life, than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, *Man was made to Mourn*, was composed. Robert had frequently remarked to me, that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, "Let us worship God," used by a decent sober head of a family introducing family worship.

* Burns was never a fastidious critic; but it is not very easy to understand his admiration of Lapraik's poetry. Emboldened by Burns's success, he, too, published; but the only one of his productions that is ever remembered now is this; and even this survives chiefly because Burns has praised it. The opening verse, however, is pretty. It may be seen at length in Allan Cunningham's "Scottish Songs," vol. iii. p. 290.

To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for the *Cottar's Saturday Night*. The hint of the plan, and title of the poem, were taken from Ferguson's *Farmer's Ingle*.

"When Robert had not some pleasure in view, in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons, (those precious breathing-times to the labouring part of the community,) and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat the *Cottar's Saturday Night*. I do not recollect to have read or heard anything by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul."

The poems mentioned by Gilbert Burns in the above extract, are among the most popular of his brother's performances; and there may be a time for recurring to some of their peculiar merits as works of art. It may be mentioned here, that John Wilson, alias Dr Hornbook, was not merely compelled to shut up shop as an apothecary, or druggist rather, by the satire which bears his name; but so irresistible was the tide of ridicule, that his pupils, one by one, deserted him, and he abandoned his schoolcraft also. Removing to Glasgow, and turning himself successfully to commercial pursuits, Dr Hornbook survived the local storm which he could not effectually withstand, and was often heard in his latter days, when waxing cheerful and communicative over a bowl of punch, "in the Saltmarket," to bless the lucky hour in which the dominie of Tarbolton provoked the castigation

of Robert Burns. In those days the Scotch universities did not turn out doctors of physic by the hundred, according to the modern fashion introduced by the necessities of the French revolutionary war; Mr Wilson's was probably the only medicine-chest from which salts and senna were distributed for the benefit of a considerable circuit of parishes; and his advice, to say the least of the matter, was perhaps as good as could be had, for love or money, among the wise women who were the only rivals of his practice. The poem which drove him from Ayrshire was not, we may believe, either expected or designed to produce any such serious effect. Poor Hornhook and the poet were old acquaintances, and in some sort rival wits at the time in the mason lodge.

In *Man was made to Mourn*, whatever might be the casual idea that set the poet to work, it is but too evident, that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly, —and who shall say, with absolute injustice?—the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly, nor more loftily expressed, than in some of those stanzas.

“ See yonder poor o'erlabour'd wight,
 So abject, mean, and vile,
 Who begs a brother of the earth
 To give him leave to toil.
 If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
 By Nature's laws design'd—
 Why was an independent wish
 E'er planted in my mind ?”

The same feeling strong, but triumphed over in the moment of inspiration, as it ought ever to

have been in the plain exercise of such an understanding as his, may be read in every stanza of the *Epistle to Davie*.

“ It’s no in titles nor in rank,
It’s no in wealth like Lon’on bank,
To purchase peace and rest ;
It’s no in books, it’s no in lear,
To mak us truly blest.
Think ye, that such as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive through wet and dry,
Wi’ never-ceasing toil ;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while ?”

In *Man was made to Mourn*, Burns appears to have taken many hints from an ancient ballad, entitled *The Life and Age of Man*, which begins thus :

“ Upon the sixteen hunder year of God, and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear, as writings
testifie ;
On January, the sixteenth day, as I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say—Ah ! man is made
to moan !”

“ I had an old grand-uncle,” says the poet, in one of his letters to Mrs Dunlop, “ with whom my mother lived in her girlish years ; the good old man, for such he was, was blind long ere he died ; during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of *The Life and Age of Man*.”*

The *Cottar’s Saturday Night* is, perhaps, of all Burns’s pieces, the one whose exclusion from

* This ballad may be seen in Cromeek’s Select Scottish Songs.

ated? It would be hard, I think, to speak so even of the old popish festivals to which Mr Heron alludes; it would be hard, surely, to say it of any festival in which, mingled as they may be with sanctimonious pretenders, and surrounded with giddy groups of onlookers, a mighty multitude of devout men are assembled for the worship of God, beneath the open heaven, and above the tombs of their fathers.

Let us beware, however, of pushing our censure of a young poet, mad with the inspiration of the moment, from whatever source derived, too far. It can hardly be doubted that the author of the *Cottar's Saturday Night* had felt, in his time, all that any man can feel in the contemplation of the most sublime of the religious observances of his country; and as little, that had he taken up the subject of this rural sacrament in a solemn mood, he might have produced a piece as gravely beautiful, as his *Holy Fair* is quaint, graphic, and picturesque. A scene of family worship, on the other hand, I can easily imagine to have come from his hand as pregnant with the ludicrous as that Holy Fair itself. The family prayers of the Saturday's night, and the rural celebration of the Eucharist, are parts of the same system—the system which has made the people of Scotland what they are—and what, it is to be hoped, they will continue to be. And when men ask of themselves what this great national poet really thought of a system in which minds immeasurably inferior to his can see so much to venerate, it is surely just that they should pay most attention to what he has delivered under the gravest sanction. In noble natures, we may be sure, the source of tears lies nearer the heart than that of smiles.

The Reverend Hamilton Paul does not desert his post on occasion of the *Holy Fair*; he defends that piece as manfully as *Holy Willie*; and, indeed, expressly applauds Burns for having endeavoured to explode "abuses discountenanced by the General Assembly." The General Assembly would no doubt say, both of the poet and the commentator, *non tali auxilio*.

Hallowe'en, a descriptive poem, perhaps even more exquisitely wrought than the *Holy Fair*, and containing nothing that could offend the feelings of anybody, was produced about the same period. Burns's art had now reached its climax; but it is time that we should revert more particularly to the personal history of the poet.

He seems to have very soon perceived, that the farm of Mossiel could at the best furnish no more than the bare means of existence to so large a family; and wearied with the "prospects drear," from which he only escaped in occasional intervals of social merriment, or when gay flashes of solitary fancy, for they were no more, threw sunshine on everything, he very naturally took up the notion of quitting Scotland for a time, and trying his fortune in the West Indies, where, as is well known, the managers of the plantations are, in the great majority of cases, Scotchmen of Burns's own rank and condition. His letters show, that on two or three different occasions, long before his poetry had excited any attention, he had applied for, and nearly obtained appointments of this sort, through the intervention of his acquaintances in the seaport of Irvine. Petty accidents, not worth describing, interfered to disappoint him from time to time; but at last a new burst of misfortune rendered him doubly anxious to escape from his

tive land ; and but for an accident, which no one will call petty, his arrangements would certainly have been completed.

But we must not come quite so rapidly to the last of his Ayrshire love-stories.

How many lesser romances of this order were evolved and completed during his residence at Mossgiel, it is needless to inquire ; that they were many, his songs prove, for in those days he wrote no love-songs on imaginary heroines.* *Mary Morrison—Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows—On Cessnock bank there lives a lass*—belong to this period ; and there are three or four inspired by Mary Campbell—the object of by far the deepest passion that ever Burns knew, and which he has accordingly immortalized in the noblest of his elegiacs.

In introducing to Mr Thomson's notice the song,—

“ Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore ?—
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar ?”

Burns says, “ In my early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took this farewell of a dear girl ;” and, afterwards, in a note on—

“ Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The Castle o' Montgomerie ;
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie ;
There Summer first unfaulds her robes,
And there they langest tarry,
For there I took the last farewell
O' my sweet Highland Mary,”

* Letters to Mr Thomson, No. IV.

he adds,—“ After a pretty long trial of the most ardent-reciprocal affection, we met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr; where we spent a day in taking a farewell before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of the autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to her grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness;” and Mr Cromek, speaking of the same “ day of parting love,” gives, though without mentioning his authority, some further particulars, which no one would willingly believe to be apocryphal. “ This adieu,” says that zealous inquirer into the details of Burns’s story, “ was performed with all those simple and striking ceremonials, which rustic sentiment has devised to prolong tender emotions, and to impose awe. The lovers stood on each side of a small purling brook—they laved their hands in the limpid stream—and, holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. They parted—never to meet again.” It is proper to add, that Mr Cromek’s story, which even Allan Cunningham was disposed to receive with suspicion, has recently been confirmed very strongly by the accidental discovery of a Bible, presented by Burns to *Mary Campbell*, in the possession of her still surviving sister at Ardrossan. Upon the boards of the first volume is inscribed, in Burns’s hand-writing,—“ And ye shall not swear by my name falsely—I am the Lord.—Levit. chap. xix. v. 12.” On the second volume,—“ Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt per-

form unto the Lord thine oath.—St Matth. chap. v., v. 33.” And, on a blank leaf of either,—“Robert Burns, Mossgiel.”

How lasting was the poet's remembrance of this pure love, and its tragic termination, will be seen hereafter.*

Highland Mary, however, seems to have died ere her lover had made any of his more serious attempts in poetry. In the Epistle to Mr Sillar, (as we have already hinted,) the very earliest, according to Gilbert, of these attempts, the poet celebrates “his Davie and his Jean.”

This was Jean Armour, a young woman, a step, if anything, above Burns's own rank in life,† the daughter of a respectable man, a master-mason, in the village of Mauchline, where she was at the time the reigning toast, and who still survives, as the respected widow of our poet. There are numberless allusions to her maiden charms in the best pieces which he produced at Mossgiel.

The time is not yet come, in which all the details of this story can be expected. Jean Armour found herself “as ladies wish to be that love their *lords*.” And how slightly such a circumstance might affect the character and reputation of a young woman in her sphere of rural life at that period, every Scotsman will understand—to any but a

* Cromeek, p. 238.

† “In Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
The pride of the place and its neighbourhood a’;
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
In Lon’on or Paris they’d gotten it a’:

“*Miss Miller* is fine, *Miss Markland*'s divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and *Miss Betty* is braw;
There's beauty and fortune to get wi' *Miss Morton*.
But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'.”

Scotman, it might, perhaps, be difficult to explain. The manly readiness with which the young rustics commonly come forward to avert by marriage the worst consequences of such indiscretions, cannot be denied ; nor, perhaps, is there any class of society in any country, in which *matrimonial* infidelity is less known than among the female peasantry of Scotland.

Burns's worldly circumstances were in a most miserable state when he was informed of Miss Armour's condition ; and the first announcement of it staggered him like a blow. He saw nothing for it but to fly the country at once ; and, in a note to James Smith of Mauchline, the confident of his amour, he thus wrote :—" Against two things I am fixed as fate—staying at home, and owning her conjugally. The first, by Heaven, I will not do !—the last, by hell, I will never do !—A good God bless you, and make you happy, up to the warmest weeping wish of parting friendship. . . . If you see Jean, tell her I will meet her, so help me God in my hour of need."

The lovers met accordingly ; and the result of the meeting was what was to be anticipated from the tenderness and the manliness of Burns's feelings. All dread of personal inconvenience yielded at once to the tears of the woman he loved, and, ere they parted, he gave into her keeping a written acknowledgment of marriage, which, when produced by a person in Miss Armour's condition, is, according to the Scots law, to be accepted as legal evidence of an *irregular* marriage having really taken place ; it being of course understood that the marriage was to be formally avowed as soon as the consequences of their imprudence could no longer be concealed from her family.

The disclosure was deferred to the last moment, and it was received by the father of Miss Armour with equal surprise and anger. Burns, confessing himself to be unequal to the maintenance of a family, proposed to go immediately to Jamaica, where he hoped to find better fortunes. He offered, if this were rejected, to abandon his farm, which was by this time a hopeless concern, and earn bread at least for his wife and children as a daily labourer at home; but nothing could appease the indignation of Armour, who, Professor Walker hints, had entertained previously a very bad opinion of Burns's whole character. By what arguments he prevailed on his daughter to take so strange and so painful a step we know not; but the fact is certain, that, at his urgent entreaty, she destroyed the document,* which must have been to

* The comments of the Rev. Hamilton Paul, on this delicate part of the poet's story, are too meritorious to be omitted.

"The scenery of the Ayr," says he, "from Sorn to the ancient burgh at its mouth, though it may be equalled in grandeur, is scarcely anywhere surpassed in beauty. To stroll by the meadows, to wander amid the green woods, to lean over its precipitous and rocky banks, to explore its coves, to survey its Gothic towers, and to admire its modern edifices, is not only highly delightful, but truly inspiring. In the poet, in his excursions along the banks of the river, or in penetrating into the deepest recesses of the grove, he accompanied by his favourite fair one, whose admiration of rural and sylvan beauty is akin to his own, however hazardous the experiment, the bliss is ecstatic. To warn the young and unsuspecting of their danger, is only to stimulate their curiosity. The well-meant dissuasive of Thomson is more seductive in its tendency than the admirers of that poet's morality are aware—

" Ah ! then, ye Fair,
Be greatly cautious of your sliding heels;
Dare not the infectious sight—not in the bowels

her the most precious of her possessions—the only evidence of her marriage.

It was under such extraordinary circumstances that Miss Armour became the mother of twins.

Burns's love and pride, the two most powerful feelings of his mind, had been equally wounded. His anger and grief together drove him, according to every account, to the verge of absolute insanity; and some of his letters on this occasion, both published and unpublished, have certainly all the appearance of having been written in as deep a concentration of despair as ever preceded the most awful of human calamities. His first thought had been, as we have seen, to fly at once from the scene of his disgrace and misery; and this course seemed now to be absolutely necessary. He was summoned to find security for the maintenance of the

Where woodbines flaunt, and roses shed a couch,
While evening draws her crimson curtains round,
Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.'

We are decidedly of opinion, that the inexperienced fair will be equally disposed to disregard this sentimental prohibition, and to accept the invitation of another bard, whose libertinism is less disguised,—

'Will you go to the bower I have shaded for you
Your bed shall be roses bespangled with dew.'

———'To dear deluding woman
The joy of joys,'"

continues this divine, "Burns was partial in the extreme. This was owing, as well to his constitutional temperament, as to the admiration which he drew from the female world, and the facility with which they met his advances. But his aberrations must have been notorious, when a man in the rank of Miss Armour's father refused his consent to his permanent union with his unfortunate daughter. Among the lower classes of the community, subsequent marriage is reckoned an ample atonement for former indiscretion, and *ante-nuptial incontinency* is looked upon as scarcely a transgression."

children whom he was prevented from legitimating, and such was his poverty that he could not satisfy the parish-officers. I suppose security for some four or five pounds a-year was the utmost that could have been demanded from a person of his rank ; but the man who had in his desk the immortal poems to which we have been referring above, either disdained to ask, or tried in vain to find, pecuniary assistance in his hour of need ; and the only alternative that presented itself to his view was America or a jail.

Who can ever learn without grief and indignation, that it was the victim of *such* miseries who, at such a moment, could pour out such a strain as the *Lament* ?

“ O thou pale orb, that silent shines,
While care untroubled mortals sleep !
Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep !
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan unwarmed beam ;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How *life* and *love* are all a dream.

“ No idly-feign'd poetic plaints,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim ;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains ;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame :
The plighted faith ; the mutual flame ;
The oft attested Pow'rs above ;
The *promised Father's tender name* ;
These were the pledges of my love !”

CHAPTER IV.

" He saw misfortune's could nor'-west,
 Lang mustering up a bitter blast ;
 A jiliet brak his heart at last,
 Ill may she be !
 So, took a birth afore the mast,
 An' owre the sea, "

JAMAICA was now his mark, and after some litigation, and not a little trouble, the situation of hunt-overseer on the estate of a Dr Douglas at colony, was procured for him by one of his friends in the town of Irvine. Money to pay for passage, however, he had not : and it at last occurred to him that the few pounds requisite for this purpose, might be raised by the publication of some of the finest poems that ever delighted mankind. His landlord, Gavin Hamilton, Mr Aiken, and other friends, encouraged him warmly ; and after some hesitation, he at length resolved to hazard an experiment which might perhaps better his circumstances ; and, if any tolerable number of subscribers could be procured, could not make them worse than they were already. His rural patrons exerted themselves with success in the matter ; and so many copies were soon subscribed for, that Burns entered into terms with a printer in Kilmarnock, began to copy out his performances for the press. He carried his MSS. piecemeal to the printer ; and encouraged by the ray of light which expected patronage had begun to throw on

his affairs, composed, while the printing was in progress, some of the best poems of the collection. The tale of the *Two Dogs*, for instance, with which the volume commenced, is known to have been written in the short interval between the publication being determined on and the printing begun. His own account of the business to Dr Moore is as follows :—

“ I gave up my part of the farm to my brother : in truth, it was only nominally mine ; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But before leaving my native land, I resolved to publish my Poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power : I thought they had merit ; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or, perhaps, a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits. I can truly say that, *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion, that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves.—To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone ; I balanced myself with others : I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet : I studied assiduously Nature’s design in my formation—where the lights and *shades* in character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause ; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty

of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, for which I got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.*—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

‘ Hungry ruin had me in the wind.’

“ I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast*, when a letter from Dr Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition.”

To the above rapid narrative of the poet, we may annex a few details, gathered from his various biographers and from his own letters.

While his sheets were in the press, it appears, that his friends, Hamilton and Aiken, revolved various schemes for procuring him the means of remaining in Scotland; and having studied some of the practical branches of mathematics, as we have seen, and in particular *gauging*, it occurred to him-

* *Gilbert Burns* mentions, that a single individual, Mr *William Parker*, merchant in *Kilmarnock*, subscribed for 35 copies.

self that a situation in the Excise might be better suited to him than any other he was at all likely to obtain by the intervention of such patrons as he possessed.

He appears to have lingered longer after the publication of the poems than one might suppose from his own narrative, in the hope that these gentlemen might at length succeed in their efforts in his behalf. The poems were received with favour, even with rapture, in the county of Ayr, and ere long over the adjoining counties. "Old and young," thus speaks Robert Heron, "high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even ploughboys and maid-servants would have gladly bestowed the wages they earned the most hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might but procure the Works of Burns."—The poet soon found that his person also had become an object of general curiosity, and that a lively interest in his personal fortunes was excited among some of the gentry of the district, when the details of his story reached them, as it was pretty sure to do, along with his modest and manly preface.* Among others, the celebrated Professor

* *Preface to the First Edition.*

"The following trifles are not the production of the poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idleness of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names their countrymen are, at least in their original language, a fountain shut up, and a book sealed. Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in him-

Dugald Stewart of Edinburgh, and his accomplished lady, then resident at their beautiful seat

self and rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a rhymers from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think anything of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

“ Now that he appears in the public character of an author he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence, forsooth!

“ It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that ‘ *Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!’ If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawns of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

“ To his subscribers, the author returns his most sincer

of Catrine, began to notice him with much polite and friendly attention. Dr Hugh Blair, who then held an eminent place in the literary society of Scotland, happened to be paying Mr Stewart a visit, and, on reading *the Holy Fair*, at once pronounced it the “work of a very great genius ;” and Mrs Stewart, herself a poetess, flattered him perhaps still more highly by her warm commendations. But, above all, his little volume happened to attract the notice of Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop, a lady of high birth and ample fortune, enthusiastically attached to her country, and interested in whatever appeared to concern the honour of Scotland. This excellent woman, while slowly recovering from the languor of an illness, laid her hands accidentally on the new production of the provincial press, and opened the volume at the *Cottar’s Saturday Night*. “She read it over,” says Gilbert, “with the greatest pleasure and surprise ; the poet’s description of the simple cottagers operated on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, repelling the demon ennui, and restoring her to her wonted inward harmony and satisfaction.” Mrs Dunlop instantly sent an express to Mossgiel, distant sixteen miles from her resi-

thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life ; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dulness and nonsense, let him be done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.”

dence, with a very kind letter to Burns, requesting him to supply her, if he could, with half-a-dozen copies of the book, and to call at Dunlop as soon as he could find it convenient. Burns was from home, but he acknowledged the favour conferred on him in an interesting letter, still extant; and shortly afterwards commenced a personal acquaintance with one that never afterwards ceased to befriend him to the utmost of her power. His letters to Mrs Dunlop form a very large proportion of all his subsequent correspondence, and, addressed as they were to a person, whose sex, age, rank, and benevolence, inspired at once profound respect and a graceful confidence, will ever remain the most pleasing of all the materials of our poet's biography.

At the residences of these new acquaintances, Burns was introduced into society of a class which he had not before approached; and of the manner in which he stood the trial, Mr Stewart thus writes to Dr Currie:—

“ His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth; but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened, with apparent attention and deference, on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance; and his dread of anything approaching to meanness or *servility*, rendered his manner somewhat decided

and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language, when he spoke in company, more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided, more successfully than most Scotchmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology. At this time, Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation, not, however, without lamenting that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or gauger in his own country."

The provincial applause of his publication, and the consequent notice of his superiors, however flattering such things must have been, were far from administering any essential relief to the urgent necessities of Burns's situation. *Very shortly after* his first visit to Catrine, where he met with the young and amiable Basil Lord Daer, whose condescension and kindness on the occasion he celebrates in some well-known verses, we find the poet writing to his friend, Mr Aiken of Ayr, in the following sad strain:—"I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business, the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides, I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering *stabs of remorse*, which never fail to settle on my

vitals, like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad; and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances everything that can be laid in the scale against it.”

He proceeds to say, that he claims no right to complain. “The world has in general been kind to me, fully up to my deserts. I was for some time past fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart, and inoffensive manners (which last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast) still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be *done*. When all my school-fellows and youthful compeers were striking off, with eager hope and earnest intent, on some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was ‘standing idle in the market-place,’ or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim. You see, sir, that if to *know* one’s errors, were a probability of *mending* them, I stand a fair chance; but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though *conviction must precede conversion*, it is very far from *always implying it*.”

In the midst of all the distresses of this period of suspense, Burns found time, as he tells Mr Aiken, for some "vagaries of the muse;" and one or two of these may deserve to be noticed here, as throwing light on his personal demeanour during this first summer of his fame. The poems appeared in July, and one of the first persons of superior condition (Gilbert, indeed, says *the first*) who courted his acquaintance in consequence of having read them, was Mrs Stewart of Stair, a beautiful and accomplished lady. Burns presented her on this occasion with some MSS. songs; and among the rest, with one in which her own charms were celebrated in that warm strain of compliment which our poet seems to have all along considered the most proper to be used whenever fair lady was to be addressed in rhyme.

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise:
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.
How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild evening sweeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me."

It was in the spring of the same year, that he had happened, in the course of an evening ramble on the banks of the Ayr, to meet with a young and lovely unmarried lady, of the family of Alexander of Ballamyle; and now (Sept. 1786) emboldened, we are to suppose, by the reception his volume had met with, he enclosed to her some verses, which he had written in commemoration of *that passing glimpse of her beauty, and conceived in a strain of luxurious fervour, which certainly, coming from a man of Burns's station and*

character, must have sounded very strangely in a delicate maiden's ear.

“ Oh, had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Though shelter'd in the lowest shed,
That ever rose on Scotia's plain !
Through weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would tell,
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonny lass of Ballochmyle.”

Burns is said by Allan Cunningham to have resented bitterly the silence in which Miss Alexander received this tribute to her charms. I suppose we may account for his over tenderness to young ladies in pretty much the same way that Professor Dugald Stewart does, in the letter above quoted, for “ a certain want of gentleness” in his method of addressing persons of his own sex. His rustic experience among the fair could have had no tendency to whisper the lesson of reserve.

The autumn of this eventful year was now drawing to a close, and Burns, who had already lingered three months in the hope, which he now considered vain, of an excise appointment, perceived that another year must be lost altogether, unless he made up his mind, and secured his passage to the West Indies. The Kilmarnock edition of his poems was, however, nearly exhausted; and his friends encouraged him to produce another at the same place, with the view of equipping himself the better for the necessities of his voyage. But the printer at Kilmarnock would not undertake the new impression unless Burns advanced the price of the paper required for it; and with this demand *the poet had no means of complying*. Mr Ballantyne, the chief magistrate of Ayr, (the same gentle-

man to whom the poem on the *Twa Brigs of Ayr* was afterwards inscribed,) offered to furnish the money; and probably this kind offer would have been accepted. But, ere this matter could be arranged, the prospects of the poet were, in a very unexpected manner, altered and improved.

Burns went to pay a parting visit to Dr Laurie, minister of Loudoun, a gentleman from whom, and his accomplished family, he had previously received many kind attentions. After taking farewell of this benevolent circle, the poet proceeded, as the night was setting in, "to convey his chest," as he says, "so far on the road to Greenock, where he was to embark in a few days for America." And it was under these circumstances that he composed the song already referred to, which he meant as his farewell dirge to his native land, and which ends thus :—

"Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales,
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves.
Farewell, my friends ! farewell, my foes !
My peace with these—my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell, the bonny banks of Ayr."

Dr Laurie had given Burns much good counsel, and what comfort he could, at parting; but prudently said nothing of an effort which he had previously made in his behalf. He had sent a copy of the poems, with a sketch of the author's history, to his friend Dr Thomas Blacklock of Edinburgh, with a request that he would introduce both to the notice of those persons whose opinions were at the time most listened to in regard to literary productions in Scotland, in the hope that, by their inter-

vention, Burns might yet be rescued from the necessity of expatriating himself. Dr Blacklock's answer reached Dr Laurie a day or two after Burns had made his visit, and composed his dirge ; and it was not yet too late. Laurie forwarded it immediately to Mr Gavin Hamilton, who carried it to Burns. It is as follows :—

“ I ought to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and perhaps one of the most genuine entertainments of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems ; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force or beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages ; but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved ; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse ; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

“ Mr Stewart, Professor of Morals in this University, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers ; but whether this was done, or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentle-

man, to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed: as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than anything of the kind which has been published in my memory." *

We have already seen with what surprise and delight Burns read this generous letter. Although he had ere this conversed with more than one person of established literary reputation, and received from them attentions, for which he was ever after grateful,—the despondency of his spirit appears to have remained as dark as ever, up to the very hour when his landlord produced Dr Blacklock's letter; and one may be pardoned for fancying, that in his *Vision*, he has himself furnished no unfaithful representation of the manner in which he was spending what he looked on as one of the last nights, if not the very last, he was to pass at Moss-giel, when the friendly Hamilton unexpectedly entered the melancholy dwelling.

“ There, lanely by the ingle-cheek
I sat and eyed the spewing reek,
That fill'd, wi' hoast-provoking reek,
 The auld clay-biggin',
And heard the restless rattans squeak
 About the riggin'.

* Reliques, p. 279.

All in this mottie mistie clime,
 I backward mused on wasted time,
 How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
 An' done nae thing,
 But stringin' blethers up in rhyme
 For fools to sing.

Had I to gude advice but harkit,
 I might by this hae led a market,
 Or strutted in a bank an' clarkit
 My cash-account,
 While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
 Is a' the amount."

"Doctor Blacklock," says Burns, "belonged to a set of critics, for whose *applause* I had not *dared to hope*. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir." *

Two of the biographers of Burns have had the advantage of speaking from personal knowledge of the excellent man whose interposition was thus serviceable. "It was a fortunate circumstance," says Walker, "that the person whom Dr Laurie applied to, merely because he was the only one of his literary acquaintances with whom he chose to use that freedom, happened also to be the person best qualified to render the application successful. Dr Blacklock was an enthusiast in his admiration of an art which he had practised himself with applause. He felt the claims of a poet with a paternal sympathy, and he had in his constitu-

* Letter to Moore.

tion a tenderness and sensibility that would have engaged his beneficence for a youth in the circumstances of Burns, even though he had not been indebted to him for the delight which he received from his works ; for if the young men were enumerated whom he drew from obscurity, and enabled by education to advance themselves in life, the catalogue would naturally excite surprise. . . . He was not of a disposition to act as Walpole did to Chatterton ; to discourage with feeble praise, and to shift off the trouble of future patronage, by bidding him relinquish poetry, and mind his plough." *

" There was never, perhaps," thus speaks the unfortunate Heron, whose own unmerited sorrows and sufferings would not have left so dark a stain on the literary history of Scotland, had the kind spirit of Blacklock been common among his lettered countrymen—" There was never, perhaps, one among all mankind whom you might more truly have called *an angel upon earth* than Dr Blacklock. He was guileless and innocent as a child, yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration. His heart was a perpetual spring of benignity. His feelings were all tremblingly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the pious, the virtuous. Poetry was to him the dear solace of perpetual blindness."

Such was the amiable old man, whose life Mackenzie has written, and on whom Johnson " looked with reverence."† The writings of Blacklock

* Morrison, vol. i. p. 9.

† " This morning I saw at breakfast Dr Blacklock the blind poet, who does not remember to have seen light, and is read to by a poor scholar in Latin, Greek, and French.

are forgotten, (though some of his songs in *the Museum* deserve another fate,) but the memory of his virtues will not pass away until mankind shall have ceased to sympathize with the fortunes of Genius, and to appreciate the poetry of Burns.

He was originally a poor scholar himself. I looked on him with reverence." Letter to Mrs Thrale. Edinburgh, August 17, 1773.

CHAPTER V.

“Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
 All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
 Where once beneath a monarch's feet
 Sat legislation's sovereign powers;
 From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
 As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
 And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
 I shelter in thy honour'd shade.”

THERE is an old Scottish ballad which begins thus :

“As I came in by Glenap,
 I met an aged woman,
 And she bade me cheer up my heart,
 For the best of my days was coming.”

This stanza was one of Burns's favourite quotations; and he told a friend* many years afterwards, that he remembered humming it to himself, over and over, on his way from Mossgiel to Edinburgh. Perhaps the excellent Blacklock might not have been particularly flattered with the circumstance had it reached his ears.

Although he repaired to the capital with such alertness, solely in consequence of Blacklock's letter to Dr Laurie, it appears that he allowed some weeks to pass ere he presented himself to the doctor's personal notice.† He found several of his

* David Macculloch, Esq., brother to Ardwell.

† Burns reached Edinburgh before the end of November, and yet Dr Laurie's letter, (General Correspondence, p. 37,) admonishing him to wait on Blacklock, is dated December 22.

old Ayrshire acquaintances established in Edinburgh, and, I suppose, felt himself constrained to give himself up for a brief space to their society. He printed, however, without delay, a prospectus of a second edition of his poems, and being introduced by Mr Dalrymple of Orangefield to the Earl of Glencairn, that amiable nobleman easily persuaded Creech, then the chief bookseller in Edinburgh, (who had attended his son as travelling-tutor,) to undertake the publication. The Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, the most agreeable of companions, and the most benignant of wits, took him also, as the poet expresses it, "under his wing." The kind Blacklock received him with all the warmth of paternal affection when he did wait on him, and introduced him to Dr Blair, and other eminent *literati*; his subscription lists were soon filled; Lord Glencairn made interest with the Caledonian Hunt, (an association of the most distinguished members of the northern aristocracy,) to accept the dedication of the forthcoming edition, and to subscribe individually for copies. Several noblemen, especially of the west of Scotland, came forward with subscription-moneys considerably beyond the usual rate. In so small a capital, where everybody knows everybody, that which becomes a favourite topic in one leading circle of society, soon excites an universal interest; and before Burns had been a fortnight in Edinburgh, we find him writing to his earliest patron, Gavin Hamilton, in these terms:—

"For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas a Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see *my birthday* inscribed among the wonderful events in the *Poor Robin* and *Aberdeen Almanacks*,

along with the Black Monday, and the Battle of Bothwell Bridge."

It will ever be remembered, to the honour of the man who at that period held the highest place in the imaginative literature of Scotland, that he was the first who came forward to avow in print his admiration of the genius and his warm interest in the fortunes of the poet. Distinguished as his own writings are by the refinements of classical art, Mr Henry Mackenzie was, fortunately for Burns, a man of liberal genius, as well as polished taste; and he, in whose own pages some of the best models of elaborate elegance will ever be recognised, was among the first to feel, and the first to stake his own reputation on the public avowal, that *the Ayrshire Ploughman* belonged to the order of beings, whose privilege it is to snatch graces "beyond the reach of art." It is but a melancholy business to trace among the records of literary history, the manner in which most great original geniuses have been greeted on their first appeals to the world, by the contemporary arbiters of taste; coldly and timidly indeed have the sympathies of professional criticism flowed on most such occasions in past times and in the present: But the reception of Burns was worthy of *the Man of Feeling*. After alluding to the provincial circulation and reputation of his poems,* "I hope," said The Lounger, "I shall not be thought to assume too much, if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merits of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appears to deserve. In mentioning the

* *The Lounger* for Saturday, December 9, 1786.

circumstance of his humble station, I mean not to rest his pretensions solely on that title, or to urge the merits of his poetry, when considered in relation to the lowness of his birth, and the little opportunity of improvement which his education could afford. . . . These particulars, indeed, must excite our wonder at his productions ; but his poetry, considered abstractedly, and without the apologies arising from his situation, seems to me fully entitled to command our feelings, and to obtain our applause." After quoting various passages, in some of which his readers " must discover a high tone of feeling, and power, and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of a poet," and others as showing " the power of genius, not less admirable in tracing the manners, than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature," and " with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered condition, had looked on men and manners," the critic concluded with an eloquent appeal in behalf of the poet personally: " To repair," said he, " the wrong of suffering or neglected merit ; to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride."

We all know how the serious part of this appeal was ultimately attended to ; but, in the meantime, whatever gratification such a mind as his could derive from the blandishments of the fair, *the condescension of the noble, and the flatteries*

of the learned, were plentifully administered to "the Lion" of the season.

"I was, sir," thus wrote Burns to one of his Ayrshire patrons,* a few days after the *Lounger* appeared, — "I was, when first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation;" and he concludes the same letter with an ominous prayer for "better health and more spirits."

Two or three weeks later, we find him writing as follows:—" (January 14, 1787.) I went to a Mason Lodge yesternight, where the M. W. Grand-master Charteris and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant: all the different lodges about town were present in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity, among other general toasts gave 'Caledonia and Caledonia's bard, Brother B——,' which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck: and trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, one of the Grand Officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, 'very well indeed,' which set me something to rights again."

And a few weeks later still, he is thus addressed by one of his old associates who was meditating a visit to Edinburgh. "By all accounts, it will be a difficult matter to get a sight of you at all, unless your company is bespoke a week before-

* Letter to Mr Ballantyne of Ayr, December 13, 1786. *Reliques*, p. 12.

hand. There are great rumours here of your intimacy with the Duchess of Gordon, and other ladies of distinction. I am really told that

‘ Cards to invite, fly by thousands each night ;’

and if you had one, there would also, I suppose, be ‘ bribes for your old secretary.’ I observe you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, and avoid, if possible, the fate of poor Ferguson. *Quærenda pecunia primum est—Virtus post nummos*, is a good maxim to thrive by. You seemed to despise it while in this country ; but, probably, some philosophers in Edinburgh have taught you better sense.”

In this proud career, however, the popular idol needed no slave to whisper whence he had risen, and whither he was to return in the ebb of the spring-tide of fortune. His “ prophetic soul” was probably furnished with a sufficient memento every night—when, from the soft homage of glittering saloons, or the tumultuous applause of convivial assemblies, he made his retreat to the humble garret of a *writer’s* apprentice, a native of Mauchline, and as poor as himself, whose only bed “ Caledonia’s Bard” was fain to partake throughout this triumphant winter.*

He bore all his honours in a manner worthy of himself ; and of this the testimonies are so nume-

* “ Old Mr Richmond of Mauchline, told me that Burns spent the first winter of his residence in Edinburgh, in his lodgings. They slept in the same bed, and had only one room. It was in the house of a Mrs Carfrae, Baxter’s Close, Lawnmarket, first scale-stair on the left hand in going down, first door in the stair.” I quote from a letter of Mr R. Chambers, the diligent local antiquary of Edinburgh, to whom I owe many obligations.

rous, that the only difficulty is that of selection. "The attentions he received," says Mr Dugald Stewart, "from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country ; nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance."

Professor Walker, who met him, for the first time, early in the same season, at breakfast in Dr Blacklock's house, has thus recorded his impressions :—"I was not much struck with his first appearance, as I had previously heard it described. His person, though strong and well knit, and much superior to what might be expected in a ploughman, was still rather coarse in its outline. His stature, from want of setting up, appeared to be only of the middle size, but was rather above it. His motions were firm and decided, and though without any pretensions to grace, were at the same time so free from clownish constraint, as to show that he had not always been confined to the society of his profession. His countenance was not of that elegant cast, which is most frequent among the upper ranks, but it was manly and intelligent, and marked by a thoughtful gravity which shaded at times into sternness. In his large dark eye the most striking index of his genius resided. It was full of mind ; and would have been singularly expressive, under the management of one who could employ it with more art, for the purpose of expression.

"He was plainly, but properly dressed, in a style

mid-way between the holiday costume of a farmer, and that of the company with which he now associated. His black hair, without powder, at a time when it was very generally worn, was tied behind, and spread upon his forehead. Upon the whole, from his person, physiognomy, and dress, had I met him near a seaport, and been required to guess his condition, I should have probably conjectured him to be the master of a merchant vessel of the most respectable class.

“ In no part of his manner was there the slightest degree of affectation, nor could a stranger have suspected, from anything in his behaviour or conversation, that he had been for some months the favourite of all the fashionable circles of a metropolis.

“ In conversation he was powerful. His conceptions and expression were of corresponding vigour, and on all subjects were as remote as possible from common places. Though somewhat authoritative, it was in a way which gave little offence, and was readily imputed to his inexperience in those modes of smoothing dissent and softening assertion, which are important characteristics of polished manners. After breakfast I requested him to communicate some of his unpublished pieces, and he recited his farewell song to the Banks of Ayr, introducing it with a description of the circumstances in which it was composed, more striking than the poem itself.

“ I paid particular attention to his recitation, which was plain, slow, articulate, and forcible, but without any eloquence or art. He did not always lay the emphasis with propriety, nor did he *humour the sentiment* by the variations of his voice. *He was standing, during the time, with his face*

towards the window, to which, and not to his auditors, he directed his eye—thus depriving himself of any additional effect which the language of his composition might have borrowed from the language of his countenance. In this he resembled the generality of singers in ordinary company, who, to shun any charge of affectation, withdraw all meaning from their features, and lose the advantage by which vocal performers on the stage augment the impression, and give energy to the sentiment of the song.

“ The day after my first introduction to Burns, I supped in company with him at Dr Blair’s. The other guests were very few, and as each had been invited chiefly to have an opportunity of meeting with the poet, the Doctor endeavoured to draw him out, and to make him the central figure of the group. Though he therefore furnished the greatest proportion of the conversation, he did no more than what he saw evidently was expected.” *

To these reminiscences I shall now add those of one who is not likely to be heard unwillingly on any subject ; and—young as he was in 1786—on few subjects, I think, with greater interest than the personal appearance and conversation of Robert Burns. The following is an extract from a letter of Sir Walter Scott :—

“ As for Burns, I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum*. I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him ; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry

* Morrison’s Burns, vol. i. pp. lxxi. lxxii.

of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sat silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath,—

‘ Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden’s plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—
Bent o’er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
The big drops, mingling with the milk he drew,
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears.’

“ Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of *The Justice of Peace*. I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.

“ *His person was strong and robust; his man-*

ners rustic, not clownish ; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea, that they are diminished as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, i. e. none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments ; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness ; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling.

“ I remember on this occasion I mention, I

thought Burns's acquaintance with English Poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models; there was, doubtless, national predilection in his estimate.

"This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the Laird. I do not speak in *malam partem*; when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know anything I can add to these recollections of forty years since."—

Darkly as the career of Burns was destined to terminate, there can be no doubt that he made his first appearance at a period highly favourable for his reception as a British, and especially as a Scottish poet. Nearly forty years had elapsed since the death of Thomson:—Collins, Gray, Goldsmith, had successively disappeared:—Dr Johnson had belied the rich promise of his early appearance, and confined himself to prose; and Cowper had hardly begun to be recognised as having any considerable pretensions to fill the long-vacant throne in England. At home—without derogation from the merits either of *Douglas* or the *Minstrel*, be it said—men must have gone back at least three centuries to find a Scottish poet at all entitled

to be considered as of that high order to which the generous criticism of Mackenzie at once admitted "the Ayrshire Ploughman." Of the form and garb of his composition, much, unquestionably and avowedly, was derived from his more immediate predecessors, Ramsay and Ferguson: but there was a bold mastery of hand in his picturesque descriptions, to produce anything equal to which it was necessary to recall the days of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and *Peebles to the Play*: and in his more solemn pieces, a depth of inspiration, and a massive energy of language, to which the dialect of his country had been a stranger, at least since "Dunbar the Mackar." The Muses of Scotland had never indeed been silent; and the ancient minstrelsy of the land, of which a slender portion had as yet been committed to the safeguard of the press, was handed from generation to generation, and preserved, in many a fragment, faithful images of the peculiar tenderness, and peculiar humour, of the national fancy and character—precious representations, which Burns himself never surpassed in his happiest efforts. But these were fragments; and with a scanty handful of exceptions, the best of them, at least of the serious kind, were very ancient. Among the numberless effusions of the Jacobite Muse, valuable as we now consider them for the record of manners and events, it would be difficult to point out half-a-dozen strains, worthy, for poetical excellence alone, of a place among the old chivalrous ballads of the Southern, or even of the Highland Border. Generations had passed away since any Scottish poet had appealed to the sympathies of his countrymen in a *lofty Scottish strain*.

The dialect itself had been hardly dealt with.

“ It is my opinion,” said Dr Geddes, “ that those who, for almost a century past, have written in Scotch, Allan Ramsay not excepted, have not duly discriminated the genuine idiom from its vulgarisms. They seem to have acted a similar part to certain pretended imitators of Spenser and Milton, who fondly imagine that they are copying from these great models, when they only mimic their antique mode of spelling, their obsolete terms, and their irregular constructions.” And although I cannot well guess what the doctor considered as the irregular constructions of Milton, there can be no doubt of the general justice of his observations. Ramsay and Ferguson were both men of humble condition, the latter of the meanest, the former of no very elegant habits ; and the dialect which had once pleased the ears of kings, who themselves did not disdain to display its powers and elegancies in verse, did not come untarnished through their hands. Ferguson, who was entirely town-bred, smells more of the Cowgate than of the country ; and pleasing as Ramsay’s rustics are, he appears rather to have observed the surface of rural manners, in casual excursions to Penycuik and the Hunter’s Tryste, than to have expressed the results of intimate knowledge and sympathy. His dialect was a somewhat incongruous mixture of the Upper Ward of Lanark and the Luckenbooths ; and he could neither write English verses, nor engraft English phraseology on his Scotch, without betraying a lamentable want of skill in the use of his instruments. It was reserved for Burns to interpret the inmost soul of the Scottish peasant in all its moods, and in verse exquisitely and intensely *Scottish*, without degrading either his sentiments or his language with one touch of vulgarity. Such

is the delicacy of native taste, and the power of a truly masculine genius.

This is the more remarkable, when we consider that the dialect of Burns's native district is, in all mouths but his own, a peculiarly offensive one :—far removed from that of the favoured districts in which the ancient minstrelsy appears, with rare exceptions, to have been produced. Even in the elder days, it seems to have been proverbial for its coarseness. Dunbar, among other sarcasms on his antagonist Kennedy, says :—

“ I haif on me a pair of Lothiane hipps
Sall fairer Inglis mak, and mair perfyte,
Than thou can blabber with thy Carrick lipps ;”

and the Covenanters were not likely to mend it. The few poets* whom the west of Scotland had produced in the old time, were all men of high condition ; and who, of course, used the language, not of their own villages, but of Holyrood. Their productions, moreover, in so far as they have been produced, had nothing to do with the peculiar character and feelings of the men of the west. As Burns himself has said,—“ It is somewhat singular, that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, &c. there is scarcely an old song or tune, which, from the title, &c., can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of, those counties.”

The history of Scottish literature, from the union of the crowns to that of the kingdoms, has not yet been made the subject of any separate work

* Such as Kennedy, Shaw, Montgomery, and, more lately, Hamilton of Gilbertfield ;

“ *Who bade the brakes of Airdrie long resound
The plaintive dirge that mourn'd his favourite hound.*”

at all worthy of its importance ; nay, however much we are indebted to the learned labours of Pinkerton, Irving, and others, enough of the *general* obscurity of which Warton complained still continues, to the no small discredit of so accomplished a nation. But how miserably the *literature* of the country was affected by the loss of the court under whose immediate patronage it had, in almost all preceding times, found a measure of protection that will ever do honour to the memory of the unfortunate house of Stuart, appears to be indicated with sufficient plainness in the single fact, that no man can point out any Scottish author of the first rank in all the long period which intervened between Buchanan and Hume. The removal of the chief nobility and gentry, consequent on the Legislative Union, appeared to destroy our last hopes as a separate nation, possessing a separate literature of our own ; nay, for a time, to have all but extinguished the flame of intellectual exertion and ambition. Long torn and harassed by religious and political feuds, this people had at last heard, as many believed, the sentence of irremediable degradation pronounced by the lips of their own prince and parliament. The universal spirit of Scotland was humbled ; the unhappy insurrections of 1715 and 1745 revealed the full extent of her internal disunion ; and England took, in some respects, merciless advantage of the fallen.

Time, however, passed on ; and Scotland recovering at last from the blow which had stunned her energies, began to vindicate her pretensions, in the only departments which had been left open to her, with a zeal and a success which will ever *distinguish* one of the brightest pages of her *history*. Deprived of every national honour and dis-

inction which it was possible to remove—all the high branches of external ambition lopped off,—sunk at last, as men thought, effectually into a province, willing to take law with passive submission, in letters as well as polity, from her powerful sister—the old kingdom revived suddenly from her stupor, and once more asserted her name in reclamations which England was compelled not only to hear, but to applaud, and “wherewith all Europe rung from side to side,” at the moment when a national poet came forward to profit by the reflux of a thousand half-forgotten sympathies—amidst the full joy of a national pride revived and re-established beyond the dream of hope.

It will always reflect honour on the galaxy of eminent men of letters, who, in their various departments, shed lustre at that period on the name of Scotland, that they suffered no pedantic prejudices to interfere with their reception of Burns. Had he not appeared personally among them, it may be reasonably doubted whether this would have been so. They were men, generally speaking, of very social habits; living together in a small capital; nay, almost all of them, in or about one street, maintaining friendly intercourse continually; not a few of them considerably addicted to the pleasures which have been called, by way of excellence, I presume, convivial. Burns's poetry might have procured him access to these circles; but it was the extraordinary resources he displayed in conversation, the strong vigorous sagacity of his observations on life and manners, the splendour of his wit, and the glowing energy of his eloquence when his feelings were stirred, that made *him* the object of serious admiration among these practised masters of the arts of talk. There were

several of them who probably adopted in their hearts the opinion of Newton, that "poetry is ingenious nonsense." Adam Smith, for one, could have had no very ready respect at the service of such an unproductive labourer as a maker of Scottish ballads; but the stateliest of these philosophers had enough to do to maintain the attitude of equality, when brought into personal contact with Burns's gigantic understanding; and every one of them whose impressions on the subject have been recorded, agrees in pronouncing his conversation to have been the most remarkable thing about him.

And yet it is amusing enough to trace the lingering reluctance of some of these polished scholars, about admitting, even to themselves, in his absence, what it is certain they all felt sufficiently when they were actually in his presence. It is difficult, for example, to read without a smile that letter of Mr Dugald Stewart, in which he describes himself and Mr Alison as being surprised to discover that Burns, after reading the latter author's elegant *Essay on Taste*, had really been able to form some shrewd enough notion of the general principles of the association of ideas.

Burns would probably have been more satisfied with himself in these learned societies, had he been less addicted to giving free utterance in conversation to the very feelings which formed the noblest inspirations of his poetry. His sensibility was as tremblingly exquisite, as his sense was masculine and solid; and he seems to have ere long suspected that the professional metaphysicians who applauded his rapturous bursts, surveyed them in reality with something of the same feeling which may be supposed to attend a skillful surgeon's inspection of a curious specimen of mor-

bid anatomy. Why should he lay his inmost heart thus open to dissectors, who took special care to keep the knife from their own breasts? The secret blush that overspread his haughty countenance when such suggestions occurred to him in his solitary hours, may be traced in the opening lines of a diary which he began to keep ere he had been long in Edinburgh.

“ April 9, 1787.—As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new to one bred up in the shades of life, as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes, in a letter to Mr Palgrave, that, ‘half a word fixed, upon, or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection.’ I don’t know how it is with the world in general, but with me, making my remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure. I want some one to laugh with me, some one to be grave with me, some one to please me and help my discrimination, with his or her own remark, and at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration. The world are so busied with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest, or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them, except where that observation is a sucker, or branch, of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, notwithstanding all *the sentimental flights of novel-writers*, and *the sage philosophy of moralists*, whether we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship, *as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence, to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves*

from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repenting his confidence.

“For these reasons I am determined to make these pages my confident. I will sketch every character that any way strikes me, to the best of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes, and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, *without feud or favour*.—Where I hit on anything clever, my own applause will, in some measure, feast my vanity; and, begging Patroclus’ and Achates’ pardon, I think a lock and key a security, at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever.”

And the same lurking thorn of suspicion peeps out elsewhere in this complaint: “I know not how it is; I find I can win *liking*—but not respect.”

“Burns,” says a great living poet, in commenting on the free style, in which Dr Currie did not hesitate to expose some of the weaker parts of his behaviour, very soon after the grave had closed on him,—“Burns was a man of extraordinary genius, whose birth, education, and employments had placed and kept him in a situation far below that in which the writers and readers of expensive volumes are usually found. Critics upon works of fiction have laid it down as a rule that remoteness of place, in fixing the choice of a subject, and in prescribing the mode of treating it, is equal in effect to distance of time;—restraints may be thrown off accordingly. Judge then of the delusions which artificial distinctions impose, when to a man like Doctor Currie, writing with views so honourable, the *social condition* of the individual of whom he was treating, could seem to place him

at such a distance from the exalted reader, that ceremony might be discarded with him, and his memory sacrificed, as it were, almost without compunction. This is indeed to be *crushed beneath the furrow's weight*.*

It would be idle to suppose that the feelings here ascribed, and justly, no question, to the amiable and benevolent Currie, did not often find their way into the bosoms of those persons of superior condition and attainments, with whom Burns associated at the period when he first emerged into the blaze of reputation ; and what found its way into men's bosoms was not likely to avoid betraying itself to the perspicacious glance of the proud peasant. How perpetually he was alive to the dread of being looked down upon as a man, even by those who most zealously applauded the works of his genius, might perhaps be traced through the whole sequence of his letters. When writing to *men* of high station, at least, he preserves, in every instance, the attitude of self-defence. But it is only in his own secret tables that we have the fibres of his heart laid bare ; and the cancer of this jealousy is seen distinctly at its painful work : *habemus reum et confitentem*.

" There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin than the comparison how a man of genius, nay, of avowed worth, is received everywhere, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets. I imagine a man of abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving honour to *whom honour is*

* Mr Wordsworth's letter to a friend of Burns, p. 12.

due; he meets at a great man's table; he squires something on a Sir somebody; he knows the noble landlord at heart; gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes, beyond, perhaps, any one at table; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow, whose abilities would scarcely have made an eightpenny sailor, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice, that are withheld from the son of genius and poverty?

"The noble Glencoin has wounded me to the soul here, because I deeply esteem, respect, and love him. He showed so much attention—engrossing attention, one day, to the only blackhead at table, (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunslopate, and myself,) that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting—God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day! I am pained to think I am so capable of the throes of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues.

"With Dr. Blair I am more at my ease. I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare; or still more, when he descends from his pinnacle, and meets me on equal ground in conversation; my heart overflows with what is called liking! When he neglects me for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, what do I care for him, or his pomp either?"

"It is not easy," says Burns, attempting to be

more philosophical—"It is not easy forming an exact judgment of any one; but, in my opinion, Dr Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. Natural parts like his are frequently to be met with; his vanity is proverbially known among his own acquaintances; but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing, and a critic of the first, the very first rank in prose; even in poetry *a bard of nature's making can only take the pas of him*. He has a heart, not of the very finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short, he is a truly worthy and most respectable character."

"Once," says a nice speculator on the 'follies of the wise,'*—"Once we were nearly receiving from the hand of genius the most curious sketches of the temper, the irascible humours, the delicacy of soul, even to its shadowiness, from the warm *sketches* of Burns, when he began a diary of his heart—a narrative of characters and events, and a chronology of his emotions. It was natural for such a creature of sensation and passion to project such a regular task, but quite impossible to get through it." This most curious document, it is to be observed, has not yet been printed entire. Another generation will, no doubt, see the whole of the confession; however, what has already been given, it may be surmised, indicates sufficiently the complexion of Burns's prevailing moods during his moments of retirement at this interesting period of his history. It was in such a mood (they recurred often enough) that he thus reproached "Nature, partial nature:"

* D'Israeli on the Literary Character, vol. i. p. 136.

"Thou givest the ass his hide, the snail his shell;
 The invenom'd wasp victorious guards his cell;
 But, oh! thou bitter stepmother, and hard,
 To thy poor fenceless naked child, the bard. . . .
In naked feeling and in aching pride,
 He bears the unbroken blast from every side."

There was probably no blast that pierced this haughty soul so sharply as the contumely of condescension.

"One of the poet's remarks," as Cromek tells us, "when he first came to Edinburgh, was that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference—that in the former, though unpolished by fashion and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation, and much intelligence—but a refined and accomplished woman was a thing almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea." To be pleased, is the old and the best receipt how to please; and there is abundant evidence that Burns's success, among the high-born ladies of Edinburgh, was much greater than among the "stately patricians," as he calls them, of his own sex. The vivid expression of one of them has almost become proverbial—that she never met with a man, "whose conversation so completely carried her off her feet," as Burns's; and Sir Walter Scott, in his reference to the testimony of the late Duchess of Gordon, has no doubt indicated the two-fold source of the fascination. But even here, he was destined to feel ere long something of the fickleness of fashion. He confessed to one of his old friends, ere the season was over, that some who had caressed him the most zealously, no longer seemed to know him, when he bowed in passing

their carriages, and many more acknowledged his salute but coldly.

It is but too true, that ere this season was over, Burns had formed connexions in Edinburgh which could not have been regarded with much approbation by the eminent literati, in whose society his *debut* had made so powerful an impression. But how much of the blame, if serious blame, indeed, there was in the matter, ought to attach to his own fastidious jealousy—how much to the mere caprice of human favour, we have scanty means of ascertaining: No doubt, both had their share; and it is also sufficiently apparent that there were many points in Burns's conversational habits which men, accustomed to the delicate observances of refined society, might be more willing to tolerate under the first excitement of personal curiosity, than from any very deliberate estimate of the claims of such a genius, under such circumstances developed. He by no means restricted his sarcastic observations on those whom he encountered in the world to the confidence of his note-book; but startled polite ears with the utterance of audacious epigrams, far too witty not to obtain general circulation in so small a society as that of the northern capital, far too bitter not to produce deep resentment, far too numerous not to spread fear almost as widely as admiration. Even when nothing was farther from his thoughts than to inflict pain, his ardour often carried him headlong into sad scrapes: witness, for example, the anecdote given by Professor Walker, of his entering into a long discussion of the merits of the popular preachers of the day, at the table of Dr Blair, and enthusiastically avowing his low opinion of all the rest in comparison with Dr Blair's own col-

league and most formidable rival—a man, certainly, endowed with extraordinary graces of voice and manner, a generous and amiable strain of feeling, and a copious flow of language; but having no pretensions either to the general accomplishments for which Blair was honoured in a most accomplished society, or to the polished elegance which he first introduced into the eloquence of the Scottish pulpit. Mr Walker well describes the unpleasing effects of such an *escapade*; the conversation during the rest of the evening, “labouring under that compulsory effort which was unavoidable, while the thoughts of all were full of the only subject on which it was improper to speak.” Burns showed his good sense by making no effort to repair this blunder; but years afterwards, he confessed that he could never recall it without exquisite pain. Mr Walker properly says, it did honour to Dr Blair that his kindness remained totally unaltered by this occurrence; but the Professor would have found nothing to admire in that circumstance, had he not been well aware of the rarity of such good-nature among the *genus irritabile* of authors, orators, and wits.

A specimen (which some will think worse, some better) is thus recorded by Cromek:—“At a private breakfast, in a literary circle of Edinburgh, the conversation turned on the poetical merit and pathos of Gray’s *Elegy*, a poem of which he was enthusiastically fond. A clergyman present, remarkable for his love of paradox and for his eccentric notions upon every subject, distinguished himself by an injudicious and ill-timed attack on this exquisite poem, which Burns, with generous warmth for the reputation of Gray, manfully defended. As the gentleman’s remarks were rather

general than specific, Burns urged him to bring forward the passages which he thought exceptionable. He made several attempts to quote the poem, but always in a blundering, inaccurate manner. Burns bore all this for a good while with his usual good-natured forbearance, till at length, goaded by the fastidious criticisms and wretched quibblings of his opponent, he roused himself, and with an eye flashing contempt and indignation, and with great vehemence of gesticulation, he thus addressed the cold critic : ‘ Sir, I now perceive a man may be an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and after all be a d—d blockhead ; ’ ”—so far, Mr Cromek ; and all this was to a clergyman, and at *breakfast*.

While the second edition of his Poems was passing through the press, Burns was favoured with many critical suggestions and amendments ; to one of which only he attended. Blair, reading over with him, or hearing him recite (which he delighted at all times in doing) his *Holy Fair*, stopped him at the stanza—

Now a’ the congregation o’er
Is silent expectation,
For Russel speels the holy door
Wi’ tidings o’ *Salvation*.—

Nay, said the Doctor, read *damnation*. Burns improved the wit of this verse, undoubtedly, by adopting the emendation ; but he gave another strange specimen of want of *tact*, when he insisted that Dr Blair, one of the most scrupulous observers of clerical propriety, should permit him to acknowledge the obligation in a note.

But to pass from these trifles, it needs no effort of imagination to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the pre-

sence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, manifested, in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation, a most thorough conviction, that, in the society of the most eminent men of his nation, he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble—nay to tremble visibly—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and,—last and probably worst of all,—who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had, ere long, no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.

The lawyers of Edinburgh, in whose wider circles Burns figured at his outset, with at least as much success as among the professional literati,

were a very different race of men from these ; they would neither, I take it, have pardoned rudeness, nor been alarmed by wit. But being, in those days, with scarcely an exception, members of the landed aristocracy of the country, and forming by far the most influential body (as indeed they still do) in the society of Scotland, they were, perhaps, as proud a set of men as ever enjoyed the tranquil pleasures of unquestioned superiority. What their haughtiness, as a body, was, may be guessed, when we know that inferior birth was reckoned a fair and legitimate ground for excluding any man from the bar. In one remarkable instance, about this very time, a man of very extraordinary talents and accomplishments was chiefly opposed in a long and painful struggle for admission, and, in reality, for no reasons but those I have been alluding to, by gentlemen who in the sequel stood at the very head of the whig party in Edinburgh ; and the same aristocratical prejudice has, within the memory of the present generation, kept more persons of eminent qualifications in the background, for a season, than any English reader would easily believe. To this body belonged nineteen out of twenty of those "patricians," whose stateliness Burns so long remembered and so bitterly resented. It might, perhaps, have been well for him had stateliness been the worst fault of their manners. Wine-bibbing appears to be in most regions a favourite indulgence with those whose brains and lungs are subjected to the severe exercises of legal study and forensic practice. To this day, more traces of these old habits linger about the inns of court than in any other section of London. In Dublin and Edinburgh, the barristers are even now eminently convivial bodies of men ; but among the Scotch law-

yers of the time of Burns, the principle of jollity was indeed in its "high and palmy state." He partook largely in those tavern scenes of audacious hilarity, which then soothed, as a matter of course, the arid labours of the northern *noblesse de la robe*, (so they are well called in *Redgauntlet*,) and of which we are favoured with a specimen in the "High Jinks" chapter of *Guy Mannering*.

The tavern-life is now-a-days nearly extinct everywhere; but it was then in full vigour in Edinburgh, and there can be no doubt that Burns rapidly familiarized himself with it during his residence. He had, after all, tasted but rarely of such excesses while in Ayrshire. So little are we to consider his *Scotch Drink*, and other jovial strains of the early period, as conveying anything like a fair notion of his actual course of life, that "Auld Nanse Tinnock," or "Poosie Nancie," the Mauchline landlady, is known to have expressed, amusingly enough, her surprise at the style in which she found her name celebrated in the Kilmarnock edition, saying, "that Robert Burns might be a very clever lad, but he certainly was *regardless*, as, to the best of her belief, he had never taken three half-mutchkins in her house in all his life."* And in addition to Gilbert's testimony to the same purpose, we have on record that of Mr Archibald Bruce, (qualified by Heron, "a gentleman of great worth and discernment,") that he had observed Burns closely during that period of his life, and seen him "steadily resist such solicitations and allurements to excessive convivial enjoyment, as hardly any other person could have withstood."

* *Mr R. Chambers's MS. notes, taken during a tour in Ayrshire.*

endure his presumption ;” * an account *ex facie* probable, and which sufficiently tallies with some hints in Mr Dugald Stewart’s description of the poet’s manners, as he first observed him at Catrine, and with one or two anecdotes already cited from Walker and Cromek.

Of these failings, and indeed of all Burns’s failings, it may be safely asserted, that there was more in his history to account and apologize for them, than can be alleged in regard to almost any other great man’s imperfections. We have seen, how, even in his earliest days, the strong thirst of distinction glowed within him—how in his first and rudest rhymes he sung,

“ ——— to be great is charming ;”

and we have also seen, that the display of talent in conversation was the first means of distinction that occurred to him. It was by that talent that he first attracted notice among his fellow peasants, and after he mingled with the first Scotsmen of his time, this talent was still that which appeared the most astonishing of all he possessed. What wonder that he should delight in exerting it where he could exert it the most freely—where there was no check upon a tongue that had been accustomed to revel in the license of village-mastery? where every sally, however bold, was sure to be received with triumphant applause—where there were no claims to rival his—no proud brows to convey rebuke, above all, perhaps, no grave eyes to convey regret? “Nonsense,” says Cumberland, “talked by men of wit and understanding in the hours of relaxation, is of the very finest essence of

conviviality ; but it implies a trust in the company not always to be risked." It was little in Burns's character to submit to nice and scrupulous rules, when he knew that, by crossing the street, he could find society who would applaud him the more, the more heroically all such rules were disregarded ; and he who had passed from the company of the jolly *bachelors* of Tarbolton and Mauchline, to that of the eminent Scotsmen whose names were honoured all over the civilized world, without discovering any difference that appeared worthy of much consideration, was well prepared to say, with the prince of all free-speakers and free-livers, " I will take mine ease in mine inn !"

But these, assuredly, were not the only feelings that influenced Burns : In his own letters, written during his stay in Edinburgh, we have the best evidence to the contrary. He shrewdly suspected, from the very beginning, that the personal notice of the great and the illustrious was not to be as lasting as it was eager : he foresaw, that sooner or later he was destined to revert to societies less elevated above the pretensions of his birth ; and, though his jealous pride might induce him to record his suspicions in language rather too strong than too weak, it is quite impossible to read what he wrote without believing that a sincere distrust lay rankling at the roots of his heart, all the while that he appeared to be surrounded with an atmosphere of joy and hope.

On the 15th of January 1787, we find him thus addressing his kind patroness, Mrs Dunlop :—

" You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Alas ! madam, I know *myself and the world too well*. I do not mean any *airs of affected modesty* ; I am willing to believe

that my abilities deserved some notice ; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity, and crude unpolished ideas, on my head,—I assure you, madam, I do not dissemble, when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice, which has borne me to a height where I am absolutely, feelingly certain, my abilities are inadequate to support me ; and too surely do I see that time, when the same tide will leave me, and recede perhaps as far below the mark of truth. . . . I mention this once for all, to disburden my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say any more about it. But—‘ When proud fortune’s ebbing tide recedes,’ you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated with the inebriating cup in my hand, *looking forward with rueful resolve.*”

And about the same time, to Dr Moore :—
 “ The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, *to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poet-*

tical abilities; and as few, if any writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit, I do not deny; but I see, with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities."—And lastly, April the 23d, 1787, we have the following passage in a letter also to Dr Moore:—"I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight. I shall return to my rural shades, *in all likelihood never more to quit them.* I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, *but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles.*"

One word more on the subject which introduced these quotations:—Mr Dugald Stewart, no doubt, hints at what was a common enough complaint among the elegant literati of Edinburgh, when he alludes, in his letter to Currie, to the "not very select society" in which Burns indulged himself. But two points still remain somewhat doubtful; namely, whether, show and marvel of the season as he was, the "Ayrshire ploughman" really had it in his power to live *always* in society which Mr Stewart would have considered as "very select;" and secondly, whether, in so doing, he could have failed to chill the affection of those humble Ayrshire friends, who, having shared with *him all that they possessed* on his first arrival in *the metropolis*, faithfully and fondly adhered to

him, after the springtide of fashionable favour did, as he foresaw it would do, "recede;" and, moreover, perhaps to provoke, among the higher circles themselves, criticisms more distasteful to his proud stomach, than any probable consequences of the course of conduct which he actually pursued.

The second edition of Burns's poems was published early in March, by Creech; there were no less than 1500 subscribers, many of whom paid more than the shop-price of the volume. Although, therefore, the final settlement with the bookseller did not take place till nearly a year after, Burns now found himself in possession of a considerable sum of ready money; and the first impulse of his mind was to visit some of the classic scenes of Scottish history and romance.* He had as yet seen but a small part of his own country, and this by no means among the most interesting of her districts, until, indeed, his own poetry made it equal, on that score, to any other.

The magnificent scenery of the capital itself had filled him with extraordinary delight. In the spring mornings, he walked very often to the top of Arthur's Seat, and, lying prostrate on the turf, surveyed the rising of the sun out of the sea, in silent admiration; his chosen companion on such

* "The appellation of a Scottish bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it, is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes, and Scottish story, are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which, Heaven knows, I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles, to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers, and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes. But these are Utopian views."
—Letter to Mrs Dunlop, Edinburgh, 22d March, 1787.

occasions being that ardent lover of nature, and learned artist, Mr Alexander Nasmyth.* The Braid hills, to the south of Edinburgh, were also among his favourite morning walks; and it was in some of these that Mr Dugald Stewart tells us “he charmed him still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company.” “He was,” adds the professor, “passionately fond of the beauties of nature, and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.”

Burns was far too busy with society and observation to find time for poetical composition, during this first residence in Edinburgh. Creech's edition included some pieces of great merit, which had not been previously printed; but, with the exception of the *Address to Edinburgh*, which is chiefly remarkable for the grand stanzas on the

* It was to this venerable artist that Burns sat for the portrait engraved in Creech's edition, and since repeated so often, that it must be familiar to all readers. Mr Nasmyth has kindly prepared for the present *Memoirs* a sketch of the Poet at full-length, as he appeared in Edinburgh in the first hey-day of his reputation; dressed in tight jockey boots, and very tight buckskin breeches, according to the fashion of the day, and (Jacobite as he was) in what was considered as the Fox-livery, viz. a blue coat and buff waistcoat, with broad blue stripes. The surviving friends of Burns who have seen this vignette, are unanimous in pronouncing it to furnish a very lively representation of the bard as he first attracted public notice on the streets of Edinburgh. The scenery of the back-ground is very nearly that of Burns's native spot—the kirk of Alloway and the bridge of Doon.

CHAPTER VI.

“ Ramsay and famous Ferguson,
 Gled Forth and Tay a lift aboon ;
 Yarrow and Tweed to monie a tune
 Thro’ Scotland rings,
 While Irvine, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
 Naebody sings.”

ON the 6th of May, Burns left Edinburgh, in company with Mr Robert Ainslie,* son to Mr Ainslie of Berrywell in Berwickshire, with the design of perambulating the picturesque scenery of the southern border, and in particular of visiting the localities celebrated by the old minstrels, of whose works he was a passionate admirer ; and of whom, by the way, one of the last appears to have been all but a namesake of his own.†

* Now Clerk to the Signet. Among other changes “ which fleeting time procureth,” this amiable gentleman, whose youthful gaiety made him a chosen associate of Burns, is now chiefly known as the author of some Manuals of Devotion.

† Nicoll Burn, supposed to have lived towards the close of the 16th century, and to have been among the last of the itinerant minstrels. He is the author of *Leader Haughs and Yarrow*, a pathetic ballad, in the last verse of which his own name and designation are introduced.

“ Sing Erlington and Cowden knows, where Homes had ance commanding;
 And Drygrange, wi’ the milk white ewes, ‘twixt Tweed and Leader standing.
 The bird that flees thro’ Reedpath trees, and Gledswood banks, ilk morrow,
 May chant and sing sweet *Leader Haughs*, and bonny howms of *Yarrow*.

*But minstrel Burn cannot assuage his grief while life endureth,
 To see the changes of this age, that fleeting time procureth.
 For mony a place stands in hard case, where blythe folk kend nae sorrow;
 With Homes that dwelt on Leader side, and Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow.”*

This was long before the time when those fields of Scottish romance were to be made accessible to the curiosity of citizens by stage-coaches; and Burns and his friend performed their tour on horseback; the former being mounted on a favourite mare, whom he had named Jenny Geddes, in honour of the zealous virago who threw her stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head on the 23d of July 1637, when the attempt was made to introduce a Scottish *Liturgy* into the service of St Giles's; — the same trusty animal, whose merits have been recorded by Burns, in a letter, which must have been puzzling to most modern Scotsmen, before the days of Dr Jamieson.*

Burns passed from Edinburgh to Berrywell, the residence of Mr Ainslie's family, and visited successively Dunse, Coldstream, Kelso, Fleurs, and the ruins of Roxburgh Castle, where a holly bush still marks the spot on which James II. of Scotland was killed by the bursting of a cannon. Jedburgh — where he admired the “charming romantic situation of the town, with gardens and orchards intermingled among the houses of a once magnificent cathedral (abbey);” and was struck, (as in the other towns of the same district,) with the appearance of “old rude grandeur,” and the idleness of decay; Melrose, “that far-famed glorious ruin,”

* “My auld ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchyalld up hill and down brae, as teuch and birnie as a vera devil, wi' me. It's true she's as poor's a sangmaker, and as hard's a kirk, and lipper-laipers when she takes the gate, like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwa'e, or a hen on a het girdle; but she's a yauld pouterin girran for a' that. When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her cruiks and cramps, are fairly soupled, she beets to, beets to, and aye the hindmost hour the lightest,” &c. &c.—*Letter to Mr Nicoll, Reliques*, v. 28.

Selkirk, Ettrick, and the Braes of Yarrow. Having spent three weeks in this district, of which it has been justly said, "that every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song," Burns passed the Border, and visited Alnwick, Warkworth, Morpeth, Newcastle, Hexham, Wardrue, and Carlisle. He then turned northwards, and rode by Annan and Dumfries to Dalswinton, where he examined Mr Millar's property, and was so much pleased with the soil, and the terms on which the landlord was willing to grant him a lease, that he resolved to return again in the course of the summer.

Dr Currie has published some extracts from the journal which Burns kept during this excursion; but they are mostly very trivial. He was struck with the superiority of soil, climate, and cultivation, in Berwick and Roxburghshires, as compared with his native county; and not a little surprised, when he dined at a Farmer's Club at Kelso, with the apparent wealth of that order of men.—"All gentlemen, talking of high matters—each of them keeps a hunter from L.30 to L.50 value, and attends the Fox-hunting Club in the county." The farms in the west of Scotland are, to this day, very small for the most part, and the farmers little distinguished from their labourers in their modes of life: the contrast was doubtless stronger, forty years ago, between them and their brethren of the Lothians and the Merse.

The Magistrates of Jedburgh presented Burns with the freedom of their town: he was unprepared for the compliment, and, jealous of obligations, stepped out of the room, and paid beforehand the landlord's bill for the "riddle of claret," which

is usually presented on such occasions in a Scotch burgh.*

The poet visited, in the course of his tour, Sir James Hall of Dunglas, author of the well-known *Essay on Gothic Architecture*, &c. ; Sir Alexander and Lady Harriet Don, (sister to his patron, Lord Glencairn,) at Newton-Don ; Mr Brydone, the author of *Travels in Sicily* ; the amiable and learned Dr Somerville of Jedburgh, the historian of Queen Anne, &c. : and, as usual, recorded in his journal his impressions as to their manners and characters. His reception was everywhere most flattering.

He wrote no verses, as far as is known, during this tour, except a humorous Epistle to his bookseller Creech, dated Selkirk, 13th May. In this he makes complimentary allusions to some of the men of letters who were used to meet at breakfast in Creech's apartments in those days—whence the name of *Creech's levee* ; and touches, too briefly, on some of the scenery he had visited.

“ Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
While tempests blaw”——

Burns returned to Mauchline on the 8th of July. It is pleasing to imagine the delight with which he must have been received by his family after the absence of six months, in which his fortunes and prospects had undergone so wonderful a change. He left them comparatively unknown, his tenderest feelings torn and wounded by the behaviour of the *Armours*, and so miserably poor, that he had

* Mr R. Chambers's notes.

been for some weeks obliged to skulk from the Sheriff's officers, to avoid the payment of a paltry debt. He returned, his poetical fame established, the whole country ringing with his praises, from a capital in which he was known to have formed the wonder and delight of the polite and the learned ; if not rich, yet with more money already than any of his kindred had ever hoped to see him possess, and with prospects of future patronage and permanent elevation in the scale of society which might have dazzled steadier eyes than those of maternal and fraternal affection. The prophet had at last honour in his own country : but the haughty spirit that had preserved its balance in Edinburgh, was not likely to lose it at Mauchline ; and we have him writing from *the auld clay biggin* on the 18th of June, in terms as strongly expressive as any that ever came from his pen, of that jealous pride which formed the groundwork of his character ; that dark suspiciousness of fortune, which the subsequent course of his history too well justified ; that nervous intolerance of condescension, and consummate scorn of meanness, which attended him through life, and made the study of his species, for which nature had given him such extraordinary qualifications, the source of more pain than was ever counterbalanced by the exquisite capacity for enjoyment with which he was also endowed. There are few of his letters in which more of the dark places of his spirit come to light :—" I never, my friend, thought mankind capable of anything very generous ; but the stateliness of the patricians of Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren, (who, perhaps, formerly eyed me askance,) since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket-Milton, which

I carry perpetually about me, in order to study the sentiments, the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage—Satan. . . . The many ties of acquaintance and friendship I have, or think I have, in life—I have felt along the lines, and, d—n them, they are almost all of them of such frail texture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune.”

Among those who, having formerly “eyed him askance,” now appeared sufficiently ready to court his society, were the family of Jean Armour. Burns’s affection for this beautiful young woman had outlived his resentment of her compliance with her father’s commands in the preceding summer; and from the time of this reconciliation, it is probable he always looked forward to a permanent union with the mother of his children.

Burns at least fancied himself to be busy with serious plans for his future establishment; and was very naturally disposed to avail himself, as far as he could, of the opportunities of travel and observation, which an interval of leisure, destined probably to be a short one, might present. Moreover, in spite of his gloomy language, a specimen of which has just been quoted, we are not to doubt that he derived much pleasure from witnessing the extensive popularity of his writings, and from the flattering homage he was sure to receive in his own person in the various districts of his native country; nor can any one wonder, that after the state of high excitement in which he had spent the winter and spring, he, fond as he was of his family, and eager to make them partakers in all his good fortune, should have, just at this time, found him-

self incapable of sitting down contentedly for any considerable period together, in so humble and quiet a circle as that of Mossiel.

His appetite for wandering appears to have been only sharpened by his Border excursion. After remaining a few days at home, he returned to Edinburgh, and thence proceeded on another short tour, by way of Stirling, to Inverary, and so back again, by Dumbarton and Glasgow, to Mauchline. Of this second excursion, no journal has been discovered; nor do the extracts from his correspondence, printed by Dr Currie, appear to be worthy of much notice. In one, he briefly describes the West Highlands as a country "where savage streams tumble over savage mountains, thinly overspread with savage flocks, which starvingly support as savage inhabitants:" and in another, he gives an account of Jenny Geddes running a race *after dinner* with a Highlander's pony—of his dancing and drinking till sunrise at a gentleman's house on Loch Lomond; and of other similar matters.—"I have as yet," says he, "fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon."

In the course of this tour, Burns visited the mother and sisters of his friend, Gavin Hamilton, then residing at Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, in the immediate neighbourhood of the magnificent scenery of Castle Campbell,* and the vale of Devon.

* Castle Campbell, called otherwise the *Castle of Gloom*, is situated very grandly in a gorge of the Ochills, commanding an extensive view of the plain of Stirling. This ancient possession of the Argyll family was, in some sort, a town-residence for those chieftains in the days when the court was

He was especially delighted with one of the young ladies ; and, according to his usual custom, celebrated her in a song, in which, in opposition to his usual custom, there is nothing but the respectfulness of admiration.

“ How pleasant the banks of the clew-winding Devon,” &c.

At Harviestonbank, also, the poet first became acquainted with Miss Chalmers, afterwards Mrs Hay, to whom one of the most interesting series of his letters is addressed. Indeed, with the exception of his letters to Mrs Dunlop, there is, perhaps, no part of his correspondence which may be quoted so uniformly to his honour.

It was on this expedition, that having been visited with a high flow of Jacobite indignation while viewing the neglected palace at Stirling, he was imprudent enough to write some verses bitterly vituperative of the reigning family on the window of his inn. These verses were copied and talked of ; and although the next time Burns passed through Stirling, he himself broke the pane of glass containing them, they were remembered years afterwards to his disadvantage, and even danger. The last couplet, alluding, in the coarsest style, to the melancholy state of the good king's health at the time, was indeed an outrage of which no political prejudice could have made a gentleman approve ; but he, in all probability, composed his verses after dinner ; and surely what Burns would fain have undone, others should have been not unwilling to

usually held at Stirling, Linlithgow, or Falkland. The castle was burnt by Montrose, and has never been repaired. The *cauldron inn* and *rumbling brigg* of the Devon lie near Castle Campbell, on the verge of the plain.

forget. In this case, too, the poetry “ smells of the smith’s-shop,” as well as the sentiment.

Mr Dugald Stewart has pronounced Burns’s epigrams to be, of all his writings, the least worthy of his talents. Those which he composed in the course of this tour, on being refused admittance to see the iron works at Carron, and on finding himself ill served at the inn at Inverary, in consequence of his Grace the Duke of Argyll having a large party at the Castle, form no exceptions to the rule. He had never, we may suppose, met with the famous recipe of the Jelly-bag Club; and was addicted to beginning with the point.

The young ladies of Harvieston were, according to Dr Currie, surprised with the calm manner in which Burns contemplated their fine scenery on Devon water; and the Doctor enters into a little dissertation on the subject, showing that a man of Burns’s lively imagination might probably have formed anticipations which the realities of the prospect might rather disappoint. This is possible enough; but I suppose few will take it for granted that Burns surveyed any scenes either of beauty or of grandeur without emotion, merely because he did not choose to be ecstatic for the benefit of a company of young ladies. He was indeed very impatient of interruption on such occasions; I have heard that riding one dark night near Carron, his companion teased him with noisy exclamations of delight and wonder, whenever an opening in the wood permitted them to see the magnificent glare of the furnaces; “ Look, Burns! Good Heaven! look! look! what a glorious sight!” —“ Sir,” said Burns, clapping spurs to Jenny Geddes, “ I would not look—look at your bidding, if it were the mouth of hell.”

Burns spent the month of July at Mossiel; and Mr Dugald Stewart, in a letter to Currie, gives some recollections of him as he then appeared.

“ Notwithstanding the various reports I heard during the preceding winter, of Burns’s predilection for convivial, and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me indeed himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him entirely of any merit in his temperance. I was, however, somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter’s campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed, by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject.

“ In the course of the same season I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a Masonic Lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and everything he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution.”

In August, Burns revisited Stirlingshire, in company with Dr Adair, of Harrowgate, and remained ten days at Harvieston. He was received with particular kindness at Ochertyre, on the Teith, by Mr Ramsay. (a friend of Blacklock) whose *beautiful retreat* he enthusiastically admired. His *host* was among the last of that old Scottish line

of Latinists, which began with Buchanan, and, I fear, may be said to have ended with Gregory. Mr Ramsay, among other eccentricities, had sprinkled the walls of his house with Latin inscriptions, some of them highly elegant; and these particularly interested Burns, who asked and obtained copies and translations of them. This amiable man (whose manners and residence were not, I take it, out of the novelist's recollection, when he painted Monk-barns,) was deeply read in Scottish antiquities, and the author of some learned essays on the elder poetry of his country. His conversation must have delighted any man of talents; and Burns and he were mutually charmed with each other. Ramsay advised him strongly to turn his attention to the romantic drama, and proposed the *Gentle Shepherd* as a model: he also urged him to write *Scottish Georgics*, observing that Thomson had by no means exhausted that field. He appears to have relished both hints. "But," says Mr R. "to have executed either plan, steadiness and abstraction from company were wanting."

"I have been in the company of many men of genius, (writes Mr Ramsay,) some of them poets; but I never witnessed such flashes of intellectual brightness as from him, the impulse of the moment, sparks of celestial fire. I never was more delighted, therefore, than with his company two days tête-a-tête. In a mixed company I should have made little of him; for, to use a gamester's phrase, he did not always know when to play off and when to play on.

"When I asked him whether the Edinburgh *literati* had mended his poems by their criticisms—
'Sir,' said he, 'those gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country, who spin their

thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.' ”

At Clackmannan Tower, the Poet's jacobitism procured him a hearty welcome from the ancient lady of the place, who gloried in considering herself as a lineal descendant of Robert Bruce. She bestowed on Burns what knighthood the touch of the hero's sword could confer ; and delighted him by giving as her toast after dinner, *Hooki uncas**—away strangers ! At Dunfermline the poet betrayed deep emotion, Dr Adair tells us, on seeing the grave of the Bruce ; but, passing to another mood on entering the adjoining church, he mounted the pulpit, and addressed his companions, who had, at his desire, ascended the *cuttystool*, in a parody of the rebuke which he had himself undergone some time before at Mauchline.

From Dunfermline the poet crossed the Frith of Forth to Edinburgh ; and forthwith set out with his friend Nicoll on a more extensive tour than he had as yet undertaken, or was ever again to undertake. Some fragments of his journal have recently been discovered, and are now in my hands ; so that I may hope to add some interesting particulars to the account of Dr Currie. The travellers hired a post-chaise for their expedition—the High-school master being, probably, no very skilful equestrian.

“ August 25th, 1787.—This day,” says Burns, “ I leave Edinburgh for a tour, in company with my good friend, Mr Nicoll, whose originality of humour promises me much entertainment. *Linlithgow*.—A fertile improved country is West Lo-

* A shepherd's cry when strange sheep mingle in the flock.

thian. The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportion, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Merse, Roxburgh, &c. ; and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste, ‘ a man of feeling,’ will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds, of the peasantry of Ayrshire, (peasantry they are all, below the Justice of Peace,) than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when he, at the same time, considers the Vandalism of their plough-folks, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an uninclosed, unimproved country is to me actually more agreeable as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden.”

It was hardly to be expected that Robert Burns should have estimated the wealth of nations entirely on the principles of a political economist.

Of Linlithgow he says, “ the town carries the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur—charmingly rural retired situation—the old Royal Palace a tolerably fine but melancholy ruin—sweetly situated by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful injured Mary Queen of Scots was born. A pretty good old Gothic church—the infamous stool of repentance, in the old Romish way, on a lofty situation. What a poor pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship ; dirty, narrow, and squalid, stuck in a corner of old Popish grandeur, such as Linlithgow, and much more Melrose ! Ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, are absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters——”

At Bannockburn he writes as follows : “ Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant countrymen coming over the

hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers, noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, blood-thirsty foe. I see them meet in glorious triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence." *

Here we have the germ of Burns's famous ode on the battle of Bannockburn.

At Taymouth, the Journal merely has—"described in rhyme." This alludes to the "verses written with a pencil over the mantel-piece of the parlour in the inn at Kenmore;" some of which are among his best purely English heroics—

"Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wandering by the hermit's mossy cell;
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
The incessant roar of headlong-tumbling floods
Here Poesy might wake her heaven-taught lyre,
And look through nature with creative fire
Here, to the wrongs of fate half reconciled,
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds;
Here heart-struck Grief might heavenward stretch her scan,
And injured Worth forget and pardon man."

Of Glenlyon we have this memorandum:—

* In the last words of Burns's note above quoted, he perhaps glances at a beautiful trait of old Barbour, where he describes Bruce's soldiers as crowding round him at the conclusion of one of his hard-fought days, with as much curiosity as if they had never seen his person before.

"Sic wordis spak they of their king;
And for his hie undertaking
Ferleyit and yernit him for to see,
That with him ay was wont to be ———"

“ Druid’s temple, three circles of stones, the outermost sunk, the second has thirteen stones remaining, the innermost eight ; two large detached ones like a gate to the south-east—*say prayers in it.*”

His notes on Dunkeld and Blair of Athole are as follows : — “ *Dunkeld*—Breakfast with Dr Stuart — Neil Gow plays ; a short, stout-built, Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest social brow—an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind openheartedness, mixed with unmistrusting simplicity—visit his house—Margaret Gow.—*Friday* — ride up Tummel river to Blair. Fascally, a beautiful romantic nest—wild grandeur of the pass of Gillikrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dundee’s stone. *Blair*—sup with the Duchess—easy and happy from the manners of that family—confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.—*Saturday*—Visit the scenes round Blair—fine, but spoilt with bad taste.”

Mr Walker, who, as we have seen, formed Burns’s acquaintance in Edinburgh through Blacklock, was at this period tutor in the family of Athole, and from him the following particulars of Burns’s reception at the seat of his noble patron are derived. “ I had often, like others, experienced the pleasures which arise from the sublime or elegant landscape, but I never saw those feelings so intense as in Burns. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, from which there is a noble waterfall, he threw himself on the heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. It was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to quit this spot, and to be introduced in proper time to supper.”

“He seemed at once to perceive and to appreciate what was due to the company and to himself, and never to forget a proper respect for the separate species of dignity belonging to each. He did not arrogate conversation, but, when led into it, he spoke with ease, propriety, and manliness. He tried to exert his abilities, because he knew it was ability alone gave him a title to be there. The duke’s fine young family attracted much of his admiration; he drank their healths as *honest men and bonny lasses*, an idea which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed his poem.

“Next day I took a ride with him through some of the most remarkable parts of that neighbourhood, and was highly gratified by his conversation. As a specimen of his happiness of conception, and strength of expression, I will mention a remark which he made on his fellow-traveller, who was walking at the time a few paces before us. He was a man of a robust but clumsy person; and, while Burns was expressing to me the value he entertained for him, on account of his vigorous talents, although they were clouded at times by coarseness of manners—‘in short,’ he added, ‘his mind is like his body, he has a confounded strong in-knee’d sort of a soul.’

“Much attention was paid to Burns both before and after the Duke’s return, of which he was perfectly sensible, without being vain; and at his departure I recommended to him, as the most appropriate return he could make, to write some descriptive verses on any of the scenes with which he had been so much delighted. After leaving *Blair*, he, by the Duke’s advice, visited the Falls

of *Bruar*, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness, with the verses inclosed."*

At Blair, Burns first met with Mr Graham of Fintray, a gentleman to whose kindness he was afterwards indebted on more than one important occasion; and Mr Walker expresses great regret that he did not remain a day or two more, in which case he must have been introduced to Mr Dundas, afterwards Viscount Melville, who was then Treasurer of the Navy, and had the chief management of the affairs of Scotland. This eminent statesman was, though little addicted to literature, a warm lover of his own country, and, in general, of whatever redounded to her honour; he was, moreover, very especially qualified to appreciate Burns as a companion; and, had such an introduction taken place, he might not improbably have been induced to bestow that consideration on the claims of the poet, which, in the absence of any personal acquaintance, Burns's works ought to have received at his hands.

From Blair, Burns passed "many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till he crossed Spey; and went down the stream through Strathspey, (so famous in Scottish music,) Badenoch, &c. to Grant Castle, where he spent half a day with Sir James Grant; crossed the country to Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor,

* The banks of the Bruar, whose naked condition called forth "the humble petition," to which Mr Walker thus refers, have since those days been well cared for, and the river in its present state, could have no pretext for the prayer—

" — Let lofty firs, and ashes cool, my lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep bending in the pool, their shadows' watery bed;
Let fragrant birks, in woodbine's drest, my craggy cliffs adorn,
And for the little songster's nest, the close embowering thorn."

the ancient seat of Macbeth, where he saw the identical bed in which, *tradition says*, King Duncan was murdered ; lastly, from Fort George to Inverness." * From Inverness, he went along the Murray Frith to Fochabers, taking Culloden-Muir and Brodie-house in his way.†—"Cross Spey to Fochabers—fine palace, worthy of the noble, the polite, the generous proprietor—the Duke makes me happier than ever great man did ; noble, princely, yet mild, condescending, and affable—gay and kind.—The Duchess charming, witty, kind, and sensible—God bless them."——

Burns, who had been much noticed by this noble family when in Edinburgh, happened to present himself at Gordon Castle, just at the dinner hour, and being invited to take a place at the table, did so, without for the moment adverting to the circum-

* Letter to Gilbert Burns, Edinburgh, 17th Dec. 1787.

† (Extract from *Journal*).—*Thursday*, Came over Culloden-Muir—reflections on the field of battle—breakfast at Kilraick*—old Mrs Rose—sterling sense, warm heart, strong passion, honest pride—all to an uncommon degree—a true chieftain's wife, daughter of Clephane—Mrs Rose, jun., a little milder than the mother, perhaps owing to her being younger—two young ladies—Miss Rose sung two Gaelic songs—beautiful and lovely—Miss Sophy Brodie, not very beautiful, but most agreeable and amiable—both of them the gentlest, mildest, sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them ! Brodie-house to lie—Mr B. truly polite, but not quite the Highland cordiality.—*Friday*, Cross the Finhorn to Forres—famous stone at Forres—Mr Brodie tells me the muir where Shakspeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting, is still haunted—that the country folks won't pass by night.—*Elgin*—venerable ruins of the abbey, a grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but nothing near so beautiful.

* Commonly spelt Kilravock, the seat of a very ancient family.

stance that his travelling companion had been left alone at the inn, in the adjacent village. On remembering this soon after dinner, he begged to be allowed to rejoin his friend; and the Duke of Gordon, who now for the first time learned that he was not journeying alone, immediately proposed to send an invitation to Mr Nicoll, to come to the castle. His Grace's messenger found the haughty school-master striding up and down before the inn door, in a state of high wrath and indignation, at what he considered Burns's neglect, and no apologies could soften his mood. He had already ordered horses, and the poet finding that he must choose between the ducal circle and his irritable associate, at once left Gordon Castle, and repaired to the inn; whence Nicoll and he, in silence and mutual displeasure, pursued their journey along the coast of the Murray Frith. This incident may serve to suggest some of the annoyances to which persons moving, like our poet, on the debateable land between two different ranks of society, must ever be subjected. To play *the lion* under such circumstances, must be difficult at the best; but a delicate business, indeed, when the jackalls are presumptuous. This pedant could not stomach the superior success of his friend—and yet, alas for poor human nature! he certainly was one of the most enthusiastic of his admirers, and one of the most affectionate of all his intimates. The abridgement of Burns's visit at Gordon Castle, “was not only,” says Mr Walker, “a mortifying disappointment, but in all probability a serious misfortune, as a longer stay among persons of such influence, might have begot a permanent intimacy; and on their parts, an active concern for his future

advancement." * But this touches on a subject which we cannot at present pause to consider.

A few days after leaving Fochabers, Burns transmitted to Gordon Castle his acknowledgment of the hospitality he had received from the noble family, in the stanzas—

“Streams that glide on orient plains,
Never bound by winter’s chains,” &c.

The Duchess, on hearing them read, said she supposed they were Dr Beattie’s, and on learning whose they really were, expressed her wish that Burns had celebrated Gordon Castle in his own dialect. The verses are among the poorest of his productions.

Pursuing his journey along the coast, the poet visited successively Nairn, Forres, Aberdeen, and Stonehive; where one of his relations, James Burness, writer in Montrose, met him by appointment, and conducted him into the circle of his paternal kindred, among whom he spent two or three days. When William Burness, his father, abandoned his native district, never to revisit it, he, as he used to tell his children, took a sorrowful farewell of his brother on the summit of the last hill from which the roof of their lowly home could be descried; and the old man appears to have ever after kept up an affectionate correspondence with his family. It fell to the poet’s lot to communicate his father’s death to the Kincardineshire kindred, and after that he seems to have maintained the same sort of correspondence. He now formed a personal acquaintance with these good people, and in a letter to his brother Gilbert, we find him describing them in

terms which show the lively interest he took in all their concerns.*

“The rest of my stages,” says he, “are not worth rehearsing: warm as I was from Ossian’s country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing towns and fertile carse?” He arrived once more in Edinburgh, on the 16th of September, having travelled about six hundred miles in two-and-twenty days—greatly extended his acquaintance with his own country, and visited some of its most classical scenery—observed something of Highland manners, which must have been as interesting as they were novel to him—and strengthened considerably among the sturdy Jacobites of the North those political opinions which he at this period avowed.

Of the few poems composed during this Highland tour, we have already mentioned two or three. While standing by the Fall of Fyers, near Loch Ness, he wrote with his pencil the vigorous couplets—

“Among the heathy hills and rugged woods,
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods,” &c.

When at Sir William Murray’s of Ochtertyre, he celebrated Miss Murray of Lintrose, commonly called “The Flower of Sutherland,” in the Song—

“Blythe, blythe, and merry was she,
Blythe was she but and ben,” &c.

And the verses *On Scaring some Wildfowl on Loch Turit*,—

“Why, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your wat’ry haunts forsake,” &c.

were composed while under the same roof. These

last, except perhaps *Bruar Water*, are the best that he added to his collection during the wanderings of the summer. But in Burns's subsequent productions, we find many traces of the delight with which he had contemplated nature in these alpine regions.

The poet once more visited his family at Moss-giel, and Mr Miller at Dalswinton, ere the winter set in; and on more leisurely examination of that gentleman's estate, we find him writing as if he had all but decided to become his tenant on the farm of Elliesland. It was not, however, until he had for the third time visited Dumfries-shire, in March 1788, that a bargain was actually concluded.

More than half of the intervening months were spent in Edinburgh, where Burns found or fancied that his presence was necessary for the satisfactory completion of his affairs with the booksellers. It seems to be clear enough that one great object was the society of his jovial intimates in the capital. Nor was he without the amusement of a little romance to fill up what vacant hours they left him. He lodged that winter in Bristo Street, on purpose to be near a beautiful widow—the same to whom he addressed the song,

“Clarinda, mistress of my soul,” &c.

and a series of prose epistles, which have been separately published, and which present more instances of bad taste, bombastic language, and fulsome sentiment, than could be produced from all his writings besides.

At this time the publication called Johnson's *Museum of Scottish Song* was going on in Edinburgh; and the editor appears to have early prevailed on Burns to give him his assistance in th

a *quadruple alliance* to guarantee the other. I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and am got half way through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my bookbinder to-day, and ordered him to get an 8vo Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town, and bind it with all the elegance of his craft."*

In another letter, which opens gaily enough, we find him reverting to the same prevailing darkness of mood. "I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see anywhere in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, Poverty, attended as he always is by iron-fisted Oppression, and leering Contempt. But I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day, and still my motto is *I DARE*. My worst enemy is *moi-même*. There are just two creatures that I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment; the other has neither wish nor fear."†

One more specimen of this magnificent hypochondriacism may be sufficient.‡ "These have been six horrible weeks. Anguish and low spirits have made me unfit to read, write, or think. I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer does a commission; for I would not *take* in any poor ignorant wretch by *selling out*. Lately, I was a sixpenny private, and God knows a miserable soldier enough: now I march to the campaign a starving cadet, a little more conspicuously wretched. I am ashamed of all this; for though I do not want bravery for the warfare of life, I

* Reliques, p. 43.

† Ibid. p. 44.

‡ General Correspondence, No. 43.

could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice."

It seems impossible to doubt that Burns had in fact lingered in Edinburgh, in the hope that, to use a vague but sufficiently expressive phrase, something would be done for him. He visited and revisited a farm,—talked and wrote scholarly and wisely about "having a fortune at the plough-tail," and so forth; but all the while nourished, and assuredly it would have been most strange if he had not, the fond dream that the admiration of his country would ere long present itself in some solid and tangible shape. His illness and confinement gave him leisure to concentrate his imagination on the darker side of his prospects; and the letters which we have quoted may teach those who envy the powers and the fame of genius, to pause for a moment over the annals of literature, and think what superior capabilities of misery have been, in the great majority of cases, interwoven with the possession of those very talents, from which all but their possessors derive unmingled gratification.

Burns's distresses, however, were to be still farther aggravated. While still under the hands of his surgeon, he received intelligence from Mauchline that his intimacy with Jean Armour had once more exposed her to the reproaches of her family. The father sternly and at once turned her out of doors; and Burns, unable to walk across his room, had to write to his friends in Mauchline, to procure shelter for his children, and for her whom he considered as—all but his wife. In a letter to Mrs Dunlop, written on hearing of this new misfortune, he says, "*I wish I were dead, but I'm no like to die.*" I fear I am something like—undone; but I

hope for the best. You must not desert me. Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously, though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path——But my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.”*

It seems to have been *now* that Burns at last screwed up his courage to solicit the active interference in his behalf of the Earl of Glencairn. The letter is a brief one. Burns could ill endure this novel attitude, and he rushed at once to his request. “I wish,” says he, “to get into the excise. I am told your lordship will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship’s patronage and kindness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of *home*, that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.——My heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of The Great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation; and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as of the cold denial.”†

It would be hard to think that this letter was coldly or negligently received; on the contrary, we know that Burns’s gratitude to Lord Glencairn lasted as long as his life. But the excise ap-

* Reliques, p. 48.

† General Correspondence, No. 40.

pointment which he coveted was not procured by any exertion of his noble patron's influence. Mr Alexander Wood, surgeon, (still affectionately remembered in Scotland as "kind old Sandy Wood,") happening to hear Burns, while his patient, mention the object of his wishes, went immediately, without dropping any hint of his intention, and communicated the state of the poet's case to Mr Graham of Fintray, one of the commissioners of excise, who had met Burns at the Duke of Athole's in the autumn, and who immediately had the poet's name put on the roll.

"I have chosen this, my dear friend, (thus wrote Burns to Mrs Dunlop,) after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of Fortune's palace shall we enter in; but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get anything to do. I wanted *un bût*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on or mortifying solicitation. It is immediate bread, and, though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life. *Besides, the commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.*"*

Our poet seems to have kept up an angry correspondence during his confinement with his bookseller, Mr Creech, whom he also abuses very heartily in his letters to his friends in Ayrshire. The publisher's accounts, however, when they were at last made up, must have given the impatient author a very agreeable surprise; for, in his letter above quoted, to Lord Glencairn, we find him expressing his hopes that the gross profits of his book might amount to "better than L.200," whereas,

on the day of settling with Mr Creech, he found himself in possession of L.500, if not of L.600.*

This supply came truly in the hour of need ; and it seems to have elevated his spirits greatly, and given him for the time a new stock of confidence ; for he now resumed immediately his purpose of taking Mr Miller's farm, retaining his excise commission in his pocket as a *dernier resort*, to be made use of only should some reverse of fortune come upon him. His first act, however, was to relieve his brother from his difficulties, by advancing L.180, or L.200, to assist him in the management of Mossiel. " I give myself no airs on this," he generously says, in a letter to Dr Moore, " for it was mere selfishness on my part. I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that the throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the *grand reckoning*." †

* Mr Nicoll, the most intimate friend Burns had at this time, writes to Mr John Lewis, excise officer, at Dumfries, immediately on hearing of the poet's death,—“ He certainly told me that he received L.600, for the first Edinburgh edition, and L.100 afterwards for the copyright,” (MS. in my possession). Dr Currie states the gross product of Creech's edition at L.500, and Burns himself, in one of his printed letters, at L.400 only. Nicoll hints, in the letter already referred to, that Burns had contracted debts while in Edinburgh, which he might not wish to avow on all occasions ; and if we are to believe this, and, as is probable, the expense of printing the subscription edition, should, moreover, be deducted from the L.700 stated by Mr Nicoll—the apparent contradictions in these stories may be pretty nearly reconciled.—There appears to be reason for thinking that Creech subsequently paid more than L.100 for the copyright. If he did not, how came Burns to realize, as Currie states it at the end of his Memoir, “ nearly nine hundred pounds in all by his poems ?”

† General Correspondence, No. 66.

CHAPTER VII.

“ To make a happy fireside clime
For weans and wife—
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.”

BURNS, as soon as his bruised limb was able for a journey, went to Mossgiel, and went through the ceremony of a Justice-of-Peace marriage with Jean Armour, in the writing-chambers of his friend Gavin Hamilton. He then crossed the country to Dalswinton, and concluded his bargain with Mr Miller as to the farm of Elliesland, on terms which must undoubtedly have been considered by both parties, as highly favourable to the poet ; they were indeed fixed by two of Burns's own friends, who accompanied him for that purpose from Ayrshire. The lease was for four successive terms, of nineteen years each,—in all seventy-six years ; the rent for the first three years and crops fifty pounds ; during the remainder of the period L.70. Mr Miller bound himself to defray the expense of any plantations which Burns might please to make on the banks of the river ; and, the farm-house and offices being in a dilapidated condition, the new tenant was to receive L.300, from the proprietor, for the erection of suitable buildings. “ The land,” says Allan Cunningham, “ was good, the rent moderate, and the markets were rising.”

Burns entered on possession of his farm at Whitsuntide, 1788, but the necessary rebuilding of the house prevented his removing Mrs Burns thither

until the season was far advanced. He had, moreover, to qualify himself for holding his excise commission by six weeks' attendance on the business of that profession at Ayr. From these circumstances, he led all the summer a wandering and unsettled life, and Dr Currie mentions this as one of his chief misfortunes. The poet, as he says, was continually riding between Ayrshire and Dumfries-shire, and often spending a night on the road, "sometimes fell into company, and forgot the resolutions he had formed."

What these resolutions were, the poet himself shall tell us. On the 3d day of his residence at Elliesland, he thus writes to Mr Ainslie : " I have all along hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms, among the light-horse, the piquet guards of fancy, a kind of hussars and Highlanders of the brain ; but I am firmly resolved to sell out of these giddy battalions. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance . . . Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness."*

To all his friends, he expresses himself in terms of similar satisfaction in regard to his marriage. " Your surmise, madam," he writes to Mrs Dunlop, " is just. I am indeed a husband. I found a once much-loved, and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements, but as I enabled her to *purchase* a shelter ; and there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery. The most placid

* Reliques, p. 63.

goodnature and sweetness of disposition ; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me ; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure ; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor danced in a brighter assembly than a penny-pay wedding. To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger ; my preservative from the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me ; my antidote against the last, is my long and deep-rooted affection for her. In housewife matters, of aptness to learn, and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress, and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly an apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy, and other rural business. You are right, that a bachelor state would have ensured me more friends ; but from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number.” *

Some months later he tells Miss Chalmers that his marriage “ was not, perhaps, in consequence of the attachment of romance,” — (he is addressing a young lady,) — “ but,” he continues, “ I have no cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multi-form curse of boarding-school affectation ; and I

* See General Correspondence, No. 53 ; and Reliques, p. 60.

have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country. Mrs Burns believes as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit et le plus honnête homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever, in her life, except the Scriptures and the Psalms of David in Metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse—I must except also a certain late publication of Scots poems, which she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads of the country, as she has (O the partial lover, you will say) the finest woodnote-wild I ever heard.”*

It was during this honeymoon, as he calls it, while chiefly resident in a miserable hovel at Elliesland,† and only occasionally spending a day or two in Ayrshire, that he wrote the beautiful song : ‡

“ Of a’ the airts the wind can blaw I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives, the lassie I lo’e best ;
There wildwoods grow, and rivers row, and many a hill be-
tween ;

But day and night my fancy’s flight is ever wi’ my Jean.

O blaw, ye westlin winds, blaw saft amang the leafy trees,
Wi’ gentle gale, frae muir and dale, bring hame the laden
bees,

And bring the lassie back to me, that’s aye sae neat and clean ;
Ae blink o’ her wad banish care, sae lovely is my Jean.”

“ A discerning reader,” says Mr Walker, “ will

* One of Burns’s letters, written not long after this, contains a passage strongly marked with his haughtiness of character. “ I have escaped,” says he, “ the fantastic caprice, the apish affectation, with all the other blessed boarding-school acquirements which are *sometimes* to be found among females of the upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the misses of the would-be gentry.”—*General Correspondence*, No. 55.

† *Reliques*, p. 73.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 273.

perceive that the letters in which he announces his marriage to some of his most respected correspondents, are written in that state when the mind is pained by reflecting on an unwelcome step, and finds relief to itself in seeking arguments to justify the deed, and lessen its disadvantages in the opinion of others."* I confess I am not able to discern any traces of this kind of feeling in any of Burns's letters on this interesting and important occasion. Mr Walker seems to take it for granted, that because Burns admired the superior manners and accomplishments of women of the higher ranks of society, he must necessarily, whenever he discovered "the interest which he had the power of creating" in such persons, have aspired to find a wife among them. But it is, to say the least of the matter, extremely doubtful, that Burns, if he had had a mind, could have found any high-born maiden willing to partake such fortunes as his were likely to be, and yet possessed of such qualifications for making him a happy man, as he had ready for his acceptance in his "Bonny Jean." The proud heart of the poet could never have stooped itself to woo for gold; and birth and high-breeding could only have been introduced into a farm-house to embitter, in the upshot, the whole existence of its inmates. It is very easy to say, that had Burns married an accomplished woman, he *might* have found domestic evenings sufficient to satisfy all the cravings of his mind—abandoned tavern haunts and jollities for ever—and settled down into a regular pattern-character. But it is at least as possible, that consequences of an exactly opposite nature might have ensued. Any mar-

* Morrison, vol. i. p. lxxxvii.

riage, such as Professor Walker alludes to, would, in his case, have been more unequal, than either of those that made Dryden and Addison miserable for life.

Sir Walter Scott, in his Life of the former of these great men, has well described the difficult situation of her, who has "to endure the apparently causeless fluctuation of spirits incident to one doomed to labour incessantly in the feverish exercise of the imagination." — "Unintentional neglect," says he, "and the inevitable relaxation, or rather sinking of spirit, which follows violent mental exertion, are easily misconstrued into capricious rudeness, or intentional offence; and life is embittered by mutual accusation, not the less intolerable because reciprocally unjust."*—Such were the difficulties under which the domestic peace both of Addison and Dryden went to wreck; and yet, to say nothing of manners and habits of the highest elegance and polish in either case, they were both of them men of strictly pure and correct conduct in their conjugal capacities; and who can doubt that all these difficulties must have been enhanced tenfold, had any woman of superior condition linked her fortunes with Robert Burns, a man at once of the very warmest animal temperament, and the most wayward and moody of all his melancholy and irritable tribe, who had little vanity that could have been gratified by a species of connexion, which, unless he had found a human angel, must have been continually wounding his pride? But, in truth, these speculations are all worse than worthless. Burns, with all his faults, was an honest and a high-spirited man, and he loved the mother of his chil-

* Life of Dryden, p. 90.

dren ; and had he hesitated to make her his wife, he must have sunk into the callousness of a ruffian, or that misery of miseries, the remorse of a poet.

The Reverend Hamilton Paul takes an original view of this business : " Much praise," says he, " has been lavished on Burns for renewing his engagement with Jean when in the blaze of his fame. . . . The praise is misplaced. We do not think a man entitled to credit or commendation for doing what the law could compel him to perform. Burns was in reality a married man, and it is truly ludicrous to hear him, aware as he must have been, of the indissoluble power of the obligation, though every document was destroyed, talking of himself as a bachelor."* There is no justice in these remarks. It is very true, that, by a merciful fiction of the law of Scotland, the female, in Miss Armour's condition, who produces a written promise of marriage, is considered as having furnished evidence of an irregular marriage having taken place between her and her lover ; but in this case the female herself had destroyed the document, and lived for many months not only not assuming, but rejecting, the character of Burns's wife ; and had she, under such circumstances, attempted to establish a marriage, with no document in her hand, and with no parole evidence to show that any such document had ever existed, to say nothing of proving its exact tenor, but that of her own father, it is clear that no ecclesiastical court in the world could have failed to decide against her. So far from Burns's having all along regarded her as his wife, it is extremely doubt-

* Paul's Life of Burns, p 45.

ful whether she had ever for one moment considered him as actually her husband, until he declared the marriage of 1788. Burns did no more than justice as well as honour demanded ; but the act was one which no human tribunal could have compelled him to perform.

To return to our story. Burns complains sadly of his solitary condition, when living in the only hovel that he found extant on his farm. " I am," says he (September 9th) " busy with my harvest, but for all that most pleasurable part of life called social intercourse, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country in any degree of perfection, are stupidity, and canting. Prose they only know in graces, &c., and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs, by the 'ell. As for the muses, they have as much idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet."* And in another letter (September 16) he says, " This hovel that I shelter in while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls, and I am only preserved from being chilled to death by being suffocated by smoke. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *eclat*, and bind every day after my reapers."†

His house, however, did not take much time in building ; nor had he reason to complain of want of society long ; nor, it must be added, did Burns bind every day after his reapers.

He brought his wife home to Elliesland about the end of November ; and few housekeepers start with a larger provision of young mouths to feed *than this couple*. Mrs Burns had lain in this autumn, for the second time, of twins, and I suppose

* Reliques, p. 35.

† Ib. p. 79.

“sassy, smirking, dear-bought Bess,”* accompanied her younger brothers and sisters from Mossiel. From that quarter also Burns brought a whole establishment of servants, male and female, who, of course, as was then the universal custom amongst the small farmers, both of the west and of the south of Scotland, partook, at the same table, of the same fare with their master and mistress.

Elliesland is beautifully situated on the banks of the Nith, about six miles above Dumfries, exactly opposite to the house of Dalswinton, of those noble woods and gardens amidst which Burns's landlord, the ingenious Mr Patrick Miller, found relaxation from the scientific studies and researches in which he so greatly excelled. On the Dalswinton side, the river washes lawns and groves; but over against these the bank rises into a long red *scaur*, of considerable height, along the verge of which, where the bare shingle of the precipice all but overhangs the stream, Burns had his favourite walk, and might now be seen striding alone, early and late, especially when the winds were loud, and the waters below him swollen and turbulent. For he was one of those that enjoy nature most in the more serious and severe of her aspects; and throughout his poetry, for one allusion to the liveliness of spring, or the splendour of summer, it would be easy to point out twenty in which he records the solemn delight with which he contemplated the melancholy grandeur of autumn, or the savage gloom of winter. Indeed, I cannot but think that the result of an exact inquiry into the composition of Burns's poems, would be, that “his vein,” like that of Milton, “flowed most happily, from the autumnal equinox to the vernal.”

* *Poetical Inventory* to Mr Aiken, February, 1788.

Of Lord Byron, we know that his vein flowed best at midnight ; and Burns has himself told us that it was his custom “ to take a gloamin’ shot at the muses.”

The poet was accustomed to say, that the most happy period of his life was the first winter he spent at Elliesland,—for the first time under a roof of his own—with his wife and children about him—and in spite of occasional lapses into the melancholy which had haunted his youth, looking forward to a life of well-regulated, and not ill-rewarded, industry. It is known that he welcomed his wife to her rooftree at Elliesland in the song,

“ I hae a wife o’ mine ain, I’ll partake wi’ naebody ;
I’ll tak cuckold frae nane, I’ll gie cuckold to naebody ;
I hae a penny to spend—there—thanks to naebody ;
I hae naething to lend—I’ll borrow frae naebody.”

In commenting on this “ little lively lucky song,” as he well calls it, Mr Allan Cunningham says, “ Burns had built his house, he had committed his seed-corn to the ground, he was in the prime, nay the morning of life—health, and strength, and agricultural skill (?) were on his side—his genius had been acknowledged by his country, and rewarded by a subscription, more extensive than any Scottish poet ever received before ; no wonder, therefore, that he broke out into voluntary song, expressive of his sense of importance and independence.”* — Another song was composed in honour of Mrs Burns, during the happy weeks that followed her arrival at Elliesland :—

“ O, were I on Parnassus hill,
Or had of Helicon my fill,
That I might catch poetic skill,
To sing how dear I love thee

* Cunningham’s Scottish Songs, vol. iv, p. 86.

But Nith maun be my muse's well,
My muse maun be thy bonny sell,
On Corsincon I'll glower and spell,
And write how dear I love thee."

In the second stanza, the poet rather transgresses the limits of connubial decorum ; but, on the whole, these tributes to domestic affection are among the last of his performances that one would wish to lose.

Burns, in his letters of the year 1789, makes many apologies for doing but little in his poetical vocation ; his farm, without doubt, occupied much of his attention, but the want of social intercourse, of which he complained on his first arrival in Nithsdale, had by this time totally disappeared. On the contrary, his company was courted eagerly, not only by his brother-farmers, but by the neighbouring gentry of all classes ; and now, too, for the first time, he began to be visited continually in his own house by curious travellers of all sorts, who did not consider, any more than the generous poet himself, that an extensive practice of hospitality must cost more time than he ought to have had, and far more money than he ever had, at his disposal. Meantime, he was not wholly regardless of the muses ; for in addition to some pieces which we have already had occasion to notice, he contributed to this year's *Museum*, *The Thames flows proudly to the Sea* ; *The lazy mist hangs, &c.* ; *The day returns, my bosom burns* ; *Tam Glen*, (one of the best of his humorous songs ;) the splendid lyric, *Go fetch to me a pint of wine*, and *My heart's in the Hiellands*, (in both of which, however, he adopted some lines of ancient songs to the same tunes ;) *John Anderson*, in part also a *risfacciamento* ; the best of all his Bacchanalian

pieces, *Willie brewed a peck o' maul*, written in celebration of a festive meeting at the country residence, in Dumfries-shire, of his friend Mr Nicoll of the High-school; and lastly, that noblest of all his ballads, *To Mary in Heaven*.

This celebrated poem was, it is on all hands admitted, composed by Burns in September, 1789, on the anniversary of the day on which he heard of the death of his early love, Mary Campbell; but Mr Cromek has thought fit to dress up the story with circumstances which did not occur. Mrs Burns, the only person who could appeal to personal recollection on this occasion, and whose recollections of all circumstances connected with the history of her husband's poems, are represented as being remarkably distinct and vivid, gives what may at first appear a more prosaic edition of the history.* According to her, Burns spent that day, though labouring under cold, in the usual work of his harvest, and apparently in excellent spirits. But as the twilight deepened, he appeared to grow "very sad about something," and at length wandered out into the barn-yard, to which his wife, in her anxiety for his health, followed him, entreating him in vain to observe that frost had set in, and to return to the fireside. On being again and again requested to do so, he always promised compliance—but still remained where he was, striding up and down slowly, and contemplating the sky, which was singularly clear and starry. At last Mrs Burns found him stretched on a mass of straw, with his eyes fixed on a beautiful planet "that shone like

* I owe these particulars to Mr M'Diarmid, the able editor of the *Dumfries Courier*, and brother of the lamented author of "*Lives of British Statesmen*."

another moon ;” and prevailed on him to come in. He immediately on entering the house, called for his desk, and wrote exactly as they now stand, with all the ease of one copying from memory, the sublime and pathetic verses—

“ Thou lingering star with lessening ray,
That lovest to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher’st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade,
Where is thy place of blissful rest ;
See’st thou thy lover lowly laid,
Hear’st thou the groans that rend his breast ?” &c.

The *Mother’s Lament for her Son*, and *Inscription in an Hermitage in Nithsdale*, were also written this year.

From the time when Burns settled himself in Dumfries-shire, he appears to have conducted with much care the extensive correspondence in which his celebrity had engaged him ; it is, however, very necessary in judging of these letters, and drawing inferences from their language as to the real sentiments and opinions of the writer, to take into consideration the rank and character of the persons to whom they are severally addressed, and the measure of intimacy which really subsisted between them and the poet. In his letters, as in his conversation, Burns, in spite of all his pride, did something to accommodate himself to his company ; and he who did write the series of letters addressed to Mrs Dunlop, Dr Moore, Mr Dugald Stewart, Miss Chalmers, and others, eminently distinguished as these are by purity and nobleness of feeling and perfect propriety of language, presents himself, in other effusions of the

same class, in colours which it would be rash to call his own. In a word, whatever of grossness of thought, or rant, extravagance, and fustian in expression, may be found in his correspondence, ought, I cannot doubt, to be mainly ascribed to his desire of accommodating himself for the moment to the habits and taste of certain buckish tradesmen of Edinburgh, and other suchlike persons, whom, from circumstances already sufficiently noticed, he numbered among his associates and friends. That he should have condescended to any such compliances must be regretted; but in most cases, it would probably be quite unjust to push our censure further than this.

The letters that passed between him and his brother Gilbert, are among the most precious of the collection; for there there could be no disguise. That the brothers had entire knowledge of and confidence in each other, no one can doubt; and the plain manly affectionate language in which they both write, is truly honourable to them, and to the parents that reared them.

“Dear Brother,” writes Gilbert, January 1, 1789, “I have just finished my new-year’s day breakfast in the usual form, which naturally makes me call to mind the days of former years, and the society in which we used to begin them; and when I look at our family vicissitudes, ‘through the dark postern of time long elapsed,’ I cannot help remarking to you, my dear brother, how good the God of seasons is to us; and that, however some clouds may seem to lour over the portion of time before us, we have great reason to hope that all will turn out well.”

It was on the same new-year’s-day, that B. himself addressed to Mrs Dunlop a letter, &

which is here transcribed—it certainly cannot be read too often.

ELLIESLAND, *New-Year-Day Morning*, 1789.

“ This, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James’s description!—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. In that case, madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; everything that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment, should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste, should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

“ This day,—the first Sunday of May,—a breezy, blue-skyed noon sometime about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

“ I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the *Spectator*, ‘ The Vision of Mirza; ’ a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: ‘ On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.’

“ We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the *substance or structure* of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one

should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild brier-rose, the budding-birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew, in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the *Æolian* harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."

Few, it is to be hoped, can read such things as these without delight; none, surely, that taste the elevated pleasure they are calculated to inspire, can turn from them to the well-known issue of Burns's history, without being afflicted. It is difficult to imagine anything more beautiful, more noble, than what such a person as Mrs Dunlop might at this period be supposed to contemplate as the probable tenor of his future life. What fame can bring of happiness he had already tasted: he had overleaped, by the force of his genius, all the painful barriers of society; and there was probably not a man in Scotland who would not have thought himself honoured by seeing Burns under his roof. He had it in his own power to place

his poetical reputation on a level with the very highest names, by proceeding in the same course of study and exertion which had originally raised him into public notice and admiration. Surrounded by an affectionate family, occupied but not engrossed by the agricultural labours in which his youth and early manhood had delighted, communing with nature in one of the loveliest districts of his native land, and, from time to time, producing to the world some immortal addition to his verse,—thus advancing in years and in fame, with what respect would not Burns have been thought of; how venerable in the eyes of his contemporaries—how hallowed in those of after generations, would have been the roof of Elliesland, the field on which he “bound every day after his reapers,” the solemn river by which he delighted to wander! The plain of Bannockburn would hardly have been holier ground.

The “golden days” of Elliesland, as Dr Currie justly calls them, were not destined to be many. Burns’s farming speculations once more failed; and he himself seems to have been aware that such was likely to be the case ere he had given the business many months’ trial; for, ere the autumn of 1788 was over, he applied to his patron, Mr Graham of Fintray, for actual employment as an exciseman, and was accordingly appointed to do duty, in that capacity, in the district where his lands were situated. His income, as a revenue officer, was at first only L.35; it by and by rose to L.50; and sometimes was L.70.

These pounds were hardly earned, since the duties of his new calling necessarily withdrew him very often from the farm, which needed his *utmost attention*, and exposed him, which was still

worse, to innumerable temptations of the kind he was least likely to resist.

I have now the satisfaction of presenting the reader with some particulars of this part of Burns's history, derived from a source which every lover of Scotland and Scottish poetry must be prepared to hear mentioned with respect. It happened that at the time when our poet went to Nithsdale, the father of Mr Allan Cunningham was steward on the estate of Dalswinton: he was, as all who have read the writings of his sons will readily believe, a man of remarkable talents and attainments: he was a wise and good man; a devout admirer of Burns's genius; and one of those sober neighbours who in vain strove, by advice and warning, to arrest the poet in the downhill path, towards which a thousand seductions were perpetually drawing him. Mr Allan Cunningham was, of course, almost a child when he first saw Burns; but he was no common child; and, besides, in what he has to say on this subject, we may be sure we are hearing the substance of his benevolent and sagacious father's observations and reflections. His own boyish recollections of the poet's personal appearance and demeanour will, however, be read with interest.

"I was very young," says Allan Cunningham, "when I first saw Burns. He came to see my father; and their conversation turned partly on farming, partly on poetry, in both of which my father had taste and skill. Burns had just come to Nithsdale; and I think he appeared a shade more swarthy than he does in Nasmyth's picture, and at least ten years older than he really was at the time. His face was deeply marked by thought, and the habitual expression intensely melancholy. His frame was very muscular and well propor-

tioned, though he had a short neck, and something of a ploughman's stoop : he was strong, and proud of his strength. I saw him one evening match himself with a number of masons ; and out of five-and-twenty practised hands, the most vigorous young men in the parish, there was only one that could lift the same weight as Burns.

“ He had a very manly face, and a very melancholy look ; but on the coming of those he esteemed, his looks brightened up, and his whole face beamed with affection and genius. His voice was very musical. I once heard him read *Tam o' Shanter*. I think I hear him now. His fine manly voice followed all the undulations of the sense, and expressed as well as his genius had done, the pathos and humour, the horrible and the awful, of that wonderful performance. As a man feels, so will he write ; and in proportion as he sympathizes with his author, so will he read him with grace and effect.

“ I said that Burns and my father conversed about poetry and farming. The poet had newly taken possession of his farm of Elliesland,—the masons were busy building his house,—the applause of the world was with him, and a little of its money in his pocket,—in short, he had found a resting-place at last. He spoke with great delight about the excellence of his farm, and particularly about the beauty of the situation. ‘ Yes,’ my father said, ‘ the walks on the river bank are fine, and you will see from your windows some miles of the Nith ; but you will also see several farms of fine rich *holm*,* any one of which you might have had. You have made a poet's choice, rather than a farmer's.’

* *Holm* is flat, rich meadow land, intervening between a stream and the general elevation of the adjoining country.

“ If Burns had much of a farmer’s skill, he had little of a farmer’s prudence and economy. I once inquired of James Corrie, a sagacious old farmer, whose ground marched with Elliesland, the cause of the poet’s failure. ‘ Faith,’ said he, ‘ how could he miss but fail, when his servants ate the bread as fast as it was baked ? I don’t mean figuratively, I mean literally. Consider a little. At that time close economy was necessary to have enabled a man to clear twenty pounds a-year by Elliesland. Now, Burns’s own handywork was out of the question : he neither ploughed, nor sowed, nor reaped, at least like a hard-working farmer ; and then he had a bevy of servants from Ayrshire. The lasses did nothing but bake bread, and the lads sat by the fireside, and ate it warm with ale. Waste of time and consumption of food would soon reach to twenty pounds a-year.’ ”

“ The truth of the case,” says Mr Cunningham, in another letter with which he has favoured me, “ the truth is, that if Robert Burns liked his farm, it was more for the beauty of the situation than for the labours which it demanded. He was too wayward to attend to the stated duties of a husbandman, and too impatient to wait till the ground returned in gain the cultivation he bestowed upon it.

“ The condition of a farmer, a Nithsdale one, I mean, was then very humble. His one-story house had a covering of straw, and a clay floor ; the furniture was from the hands of a country carpenter ; and, between the roof and floor, there seldom intervened a smoother ceiling than of rough rods and grassy turf—while a huge lang-settle of black oak for himself, and a carved arm-chair for his wife, were the only matters out of

keeping with the homely looks of his residence. He took all his meals in his own kitchen, and presided regularly among his children and domestics. He performed family worship every evening—except during the hurry of harvest, when that duty was perhaps limited to Saturday night. A few religious books, two or three favourite poets, the history of his country, and his Bible, aided him in forming the minds and manners of the family. To domestic education, Scotland owes as much as to the care of her clergy, and the excellence of her parish schools.

“ The picture out of doors was less interesting. The ground from which the farmer sought support, was generally in a very moderate state of cultivation. The implements with which he tilled his land were primitive and clumsy, and his own knowledge of the management of crops exceedingly limited. He plodded on in the regular slothful routine of his ancestors; he rooted out no bushes, he dug up no stones; he drained not, neither did he enclose; and weeds obtained their full share of the dung and the lime, which he bestowed more like a medicine than a meal on his soil. His plough was the rude old Scotch one; his harrows had as often teeth of wood as of iron; his carts were heavy and low-wheeled, or were, more properly speaking, tumbler-cars, so called to distinguish them from trail-cars, both of which were in common use. On these rude carriages his manure was taken to the field, and his crop brought home. The farmer himself corresponded in all respects with his imperfect instruments. His poverty secured him from risking costly experiments; and his hatred of innovation made him *entrench himself* behind a breast-work of old *maxims* and rustic saws, which he interpreted as

oracles delivered against *improvement*. With ground in such condition, with tools so unfit, and with knowledge so imperfect, he sometimes succeeded in wringing a few hundred pounds Scots from the farm he occupied. Such was generally the state of agriculture when Burns came to Nithsdale. I know not how far his own skill was equal to the task of improvement—his trial was short and unfortunate. An important change soon took place, by which he was not fated to profit; he had not the foresight to see its approach, nor, probably, the fortitude to await its coming.

“In the year 1790, much of the ground in Nithsdale was leased at seven and ten and fifteen shillings per acre; and the farmer, in his person and his house, differed little from the peasants and mechanics around him. He would have thought his daughter wedded in her degree, had she married a joiner or a mason; and at kirk or market, all men beneath the rank of a “portioner” of the soil mingled together, equals in appearance and importance. But the war which soon commenced, gave a decided impulse to agriculture; the army and navy consumed largely; corn rose in demand; the price augmented; more land was called into cultivation; and, as leases expired, the proprietors improved the grounds, built better houses, enlarged the rents; and the farmer was soon borne on the wings of sudden wealth above his original condition. His house obtained a slated roof, sash-windows, carpeted floors, plastered walls, and even began to exchange the hanks of yarn with which it was formerly hung, for paintings and pianofortes. He laid aside his coat of home-made cloth; he retired from his seat among his servants; he—I am grieved to mention it—gave up family worship as a thing unfashionable, and became a kind of

rustic gentleman, who rode a blood horse, and galloped home on market nights at the peril of his own neck, and to the terror of every modest pedestrian.* His daughters, too, no longer prided themselves in well-bleached linen and home-made webs; they changed their linsey-wolsey gowns for silk; and so ungracefully did their new state sit upon them, that I have seen their lovers coming in iron-shod clogs to their carpeted floors, and two of the proudest young women in the parish *skaling* dung to their father's potatoe-field in silk stockings.

“When a change like this took place, and a farmer could, with a dozen years' industry, be able to purchase the land he rented—which many were, and many did—the same, or a still more profitable change might have happened with respect to Elliesland; and Burns, had he stuck by his lease and his plough, would, in all human possibility, have found the independence which he sought, and sought in vain, from the coldness and parsimony of mankind.”

Mr Cunningham sums up his reminiscences of Burns at Elliesland in these terms:—

“During the prosperity of his farm, my father often said that Burns conducted himself wisely, and like one anxious for his name as a man, and his fame as a poet. He went to Dunscore Kirk on Sunday, though he expressed oftener than once his dislike to the stern Calvinism of that strict old divine, Mr Kirkpatrick;—he assisted in forming a reading club; and at weddings and house-

* Mr Cunningham's description accords with the lines of Crabbe:

“Who rides his hunter, who his horse adorns,
Who drinks his wine, and his disbursements scorns,
Who freely lives, and loves to show he can—
This is the farmer made the gentleman.”

heatings, and kirns, and other scenes of festivity, he was a welcome guest, universally liked by the young and the old. But the failure of his farming projects, and the limited income with which he was compelled to support an increasing family and an expensive station in life, preyed on his spirits; and, during these fits of despair, he was willing too often to become the companion of the thoughtless and the gross. I am grieved to say, that besides leaving the book too much for the bowl, and grave and wise friends for lewd and reckless companions, he was also in the occasional practice of composing songs, in which he surpassed the licentiousness, as well as the wit and humour, of the old Scottish muse. These have unfortunately found their way to the press, and I am afraid they cannot be recalled.

“In conclusion, I may say, that few men have had so much of the poet about them, and few poets so much of the man;—the man was probably less pure than he ought to have been, but the poet was pure and bright to the last.”

The reader must be sufficiently prepared to hear, that from the time when he entered on his excise duties, the poet more and more neglected the concerns of his farm. Occasionally, he might be seen holding the plough, an exercise in which he excelled, and was proud of excelling, or stalking down his furrows, with the white sheet of grain wrapt about him, a “tenty seedsman;” but he was more commonly occupied in far different pursuits. “I am now,” says he, in one of his letters, “a poor rascally gauger, condemned to gallop two hundred miles every week, to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels.”

Both in verse and in prose he has recorded the feelings with which he first followed his new

ation. His jests on the subject are uniformly ter. "I have the same consolation," he tells Mr aslie, "which I once heard a recruiting sergeant e to his audience in the streets of Kilmarnock : entlemen, for your further encouragement, I assure you that ours is the most blackguard ps under the crown, and, consequently, with an honest fellow has the surest chance of pre- nent.'" He winds up almost all his statements is feelings on this matter, in the same strain.

"I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
 They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies.
 Ye ken yoursell, my heart right proud is,
 I needna vaunt ;
 But I'll sned besoms—thraw saugh-woodies,
 Before they want."

On one occasion, however, he takes a higher e. "There is a certain stigma," says he to hop Geddes, "in the name of Exciseman ; but o not intend to borrow honour from any pro- ion :"—which may perhaps remind the reader Gibbon's lofty language, on finally quitting the ned and polished circles of London and Paris, his Swiss retirement : "I am too modest, or proud, to rate my value by that of my asso- es."

Burns, in his perpetual perambulations over the ors of Dumfries-shire, had every temptation to ounter, which bodily fatigue, the blandishments hosts and hostesses, and the habitual manners those who acted along with him in the duties the excise, could present. He was, moreover, erever he went, exposed to perils of his own, the reputation which he had earned as a poet, by his extraordinary powers of entertainment onversation. From the castle to the cottage, y door flew open at his approach ; and the old

system of hospitality, then flourishing, rendered it difficult for the most soberly inclined guest to rise from any man's board in the same trim that he sat down to it. The farmer, if Burns was seen passing, left his reapers, and trotted by the side of Jenny Geddes, until he could persuade the bard that the day was hot enough to demand an extralibration. If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled round the ingle; the largest punchbowl was produced; and

“Be ours this night—who knows what comes to-morrow?”

was the language of every eye in the circle that welcomed him.* The stateliest gentry of the county, whenever they had especial merriment in view, called in the wit and eloquence of Burns to enliven their carousals. The famous song of *The Whistle of worth* commemorates a scene of this kind, more picturesque in some of its circumstances than every day occurred, yet strictly in character with the usual tenor of life among this jovial *squirearchy*. Three gentlemen of ancient descent, had met to determine, by a solemn drinking match, who should possess *the Whistle*, which common ancestor of them all had earned ages before, in a Bacchanalian contest of the same sort with a noble toper from Denmark; and the poet was summoned to watch over and celebrate the issue of the debate.

* These particulars are from a letter of David Macloch, Esq., who, being at this period a very young gentleman, a passionate admirer of Burns, and a capital singer of many of his serious songs, used often, in his enthusiasm, to accompany the poet on his professional excursions.

“ Then up rose the bard like a prophet to drink,
Craigdarroch shall soar when creation shall sink ;
But if thou would'st flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come, one bottle more, and have at the sublime.”

Nor, as has already been hinted, was he safe from temptations of this kind, even when he was at home, and most disposed to enjoy in quiet the society of his wife and children. Lion-gazers from all quarters beset him ; they eat and drank at his cost, and often went away to criticise him and his fare, as if they had done Burns and his *black bowl* * great honour in condescending to be entertained for a single evening, with such company and such liquor.

We have on record various glimpses of him, as he appeared while he was half-farmer, half-excise-man ; and some of these present him in attitudes and aspects, on which it would be pleasing to dwell. For example, the circumstances under which the verses on *The Wounded Hare* were written, are mentioned generally by the poet himself. James Thomson, son of the occupier of a farm adjoining Elliesland, told Allan Cunningham, that it was he who wounded the animal. “ Burns,” said this person, “ was in the custom, when at home, of strolling by himself in the twilight every evening, along the Nith, and by the *march* between his land and ours. The hares often came and nibbled our wheat-*braird* ; and once, in the gloaming,—it was in April,—I got a shot at one, and wounded her : she ran bleeding by Burns, who

* Burns's famous black punchbowl, of Inverary marble, was the nuptial gift of his father-in-law, Mr Armour, who himself fashioned it. After passing through many hands, it is now in excellent keeping, that of Alexander Hastie, Esq., of London.

was pacing up and down by himself, not far from me. He started, and with a bitter curse, ordered me out of his sight, or he would throw me instantly into the Nith. And had I stayed, I'll warrant he would have been as good as his word—though I was both young and strong.”

Among other curious travellers who found their way about this time to Elliesland, was Captain Grose, the celebrated antiquarian, whom Burns briefly describes as

“ A fine fat fodgel wight—
Of stature short, but genius bright ;”

and who has painted his own portrait, both with pen and pencil, at full length, in his *Olio*. This gentleman's taste and pursuits are ludicrously set forth in the copy of verses—

“ Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirke to John O'Groats,
A chield's amang ye takin' notes ;” &c.

and, *inter alia*, his love of port is not forgotten. Grose and Burns had too much in common, not to become great friends. The poet's accurate knowledge of Scottish phraseology and customs, was of great use to the researches of the humorous antiquarian ; and, above all, it is to their acquaintance that we owe *Tam o' Shanter*. Burns told the story as he had heard it in Ayrshire, in a letter to the Captain, and was easily persuaded to versify it. The poem was the work of one day ; and Mrs Burns well remembers the circumstances. He spent most of the day on his favourite walk by the river, where, in the afternoon, she joined him with some of her children. “ He was busily engaged *crooning to himsell*, and Mrs Burns perceiving that her presence was an interruption, loitered behind with

her little ones among the broom. Her attention was presently attracted by the strange and wild gesticulations of the bard, who, now at some distance, was *agonized* with an ungovernable access of joy. He was reciting very loud, and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, those animated verses which he had just conceived :—

‘ Now Tam ! O Tam ! had thae been queans
A’ plump and strappin’ in their teens ;
Their sarks, instead of creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder * linen,—
Thir breeks o’ mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush o’ good blue hair,
I wad hae gi’en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o’ the bonnie burdies !’ ” †

To the last Burns was of opinion that *Tam o’ Shanter* was the best of all his productions ; and although it does not always happen that poet and public come to the same conclusion on such points, I believe the decision in question has been all but unanimously approved of.

The admirable execution of the piece, so far as it goes, leaves nothing to wish for ; the only criticism has been, that the catastrophe appears unworthy of the preparation. Burns might have avoided this error,—if error it be,—had he followed not the Ayrshire, but the Galloway, edition of the legend. According to that tradition, the *Cutty-Sark* who attracted the special notice of the bold intruder on the Satanic ceremonial, was no

* “ The manufacturer’s term for a fine linen, woven on a reed of 1700 divisions.”—*Cromek*.

† The above is quoted from a MS. journal of *Cromek*. Mr M’Diarmid confirms the statement, and adds, that the poet, having committed the verses to writing on the top of *his sod-dyke* over the water, came into the house, and read *them immediately* in high triumph at the fireside.

other than the pretty wife of a farmer residing in the same village with himself, and of whose unholy propensities no suspicion had ever been whispered. The Galloway *Tam* being thoroughly sobered by terror, crept to his bed the moment he reached home after his escape, and said nothing of what had happened to any of his family. He was awakened in the morning with the astounding intelligence that his horse had been found dead in the stable, and a woman's hand, clotted with blood, adhering to the tail. Presently it was reported, that *Cutty-Sark* had burnt her hand grievously over-night, and was ill in bed, but obstinately refused to let her wound be examined by the village leech. Hereupon Tam, disentangling the bloody hand from the hair of his defunct favourite's tail, proceeded to the residence of the fair witch, and forcibly pulling her stump to view, showed his trophy, and narrated the whole circumstances of the adventure. The poor victim of the black-art was constrained to confess her guilty practices in presence of the priest and the laird, and was forthwith burnt alive, under their joint auspices, within watermark on the Solway Frith.

Such, Mr Cunningham informs me, is the version of this story current in Galloway and Dumfries-shire : but it may be doubted whether, even if Burns was acquainted with it, he did not choose wisely in adhering to the Ayrshire legend, as he had heard it in his youth. It is seldom that tales of popular superstition are effective in proportion to their completeness of solution and catastrophe. On the contrary, they, like the creed to which they belong, suffer little in a picturesque point of view, by exhibiting a maimed and fragmentary character, that in nowise satisfies strict taste, either

critical or moral. Dreams based in darkness, may fitly terminate in a blank : the cloud opens, and the cloud closes. The absence of definite scope and purpose, appears to be of the essence of the mythological *grotesque*.

Burns lays the scene of this remarkable performance almost on the spot where he was born ; and all the terrific circumstances by which he has marked the progress of Tam's midnight journey, are drawn from local tradition.

“ By this time he was cross the ford
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd,
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drucken Charlie brak's neck-bane ;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn ;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersell.”

None of these tragic memoranda were derived from imagination. Nor was Tam o' Shanter himself an imaginary character. Shanter is a farm close to Kirkoswald's, that smuggling village, in which Burns, when nineteen years old, studied mensuration, and “ first became acquainted with scenes of swaggering riot.” The then occupier of Shanter, by name Douglas Grahame, was, by all accounts, equally what the Tam of the poet appears,—a jolly, careless, rustic, who took much more interest in the contraband traffic of the coast, than the rotation of crops. Burns knew the man well ; and to his dying day, he, nothing loath, passed among his rural compeers by the name of Tam o' Shanter.*

A few words will bring us to the close of

* The above information is derived from Mr R. Chambers.

Burns's career at Elliesland. Mr Ramsay of Ochertyre, happening to pass through Nithsdale in 1790, met Burns riding rapidly near Closeburn. The poet was obliged to pursue his professional journey, but sent on Mr Ramsay and his fellow-traveller to Elliesland, where he joined them as soon as his duty permitted him, saying, as he entered, "I come, to use the words of Shakspeare, *stewed in haste*." Mr Ramsay was "much pleased with his *uxor Sabina qualis*, and his modest mansion, so unlike the habitation of ordinary rustics." He told his guests he was preparing to write a drama, which he was to call "*Rob M'Quechan's Elshin*, from a popular story of King Robert the Bruce being defeated on the Carron, when the heel of his boot having loosened in the flight, he applied to one Robert M'Quechan to fix it; who, to make sure, ran his awl nine inches up the King's heel." The evening was spent delightfully. A gentleman of dry temperament, who looked in accidentally, soon partook the contagion, and sat listening to Burns with the tears running over his cheeks. "Poor Burns!" says Mr Ramsay, "from that time I met him no more."

The summer after, some English travellers, calling at Elliesland, were told that the poet was walking by the river. They proceeded in search of him, and presently, "on a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of a fox's skin on his head; a loose great-coat, fastened round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broadsword. (Was he still dreaming of the Bruce?) It was Burns. He received them with great cordiality, and asked them to share his humble dinner." These travel-

lers also classed the evening they spent at Elliesland with the brightest of their lives.

Towards the close of 1791, the poet, finally despairing of his farm, determined to give up his lease, which the kindness of his landlord rendered easy of arrangement ; and procuring an appointment to the Dumfries division, which raised his salary from the revenue to L.70 per annum, removed his family to the county town, in which he terminated his days. His conduct as an excise officer had hitherto met with uniform approbation ; and he nourished warm hopes of being promoted, when he had thus avowedly devoted himself altogether to the service.

He left Elliesland, however, with a heavy heart. The affection of his neighbours was rekindled in all its early fervour by the thoughts of parting with him ; and the *roup* of his farming-stock and other effects, was, in spite of whisky, a very melancholy scene. The competition for his chattels (says Allan Cunningham) was eager, each being anxious to secure a memorandum of Burns's residence among them.

It is pleasing to know, that among other " titles manifold" to their respect and gratitude, Burns, at the suggestion of Mr Riddel of Friars'-carse, had superintended the formation of a subscription library in the parish. His letters to the booksellers on this subject do him much honour : his choice of authors (which business was naturally left to his discretion) being in the highest degree judicious. Such institutions are now common, almost universal, indeed, in the rural districts of southern Scotland ; but it should never be forgotten that Burns was among the first, if not the very *first*, to set the example. " He was so good," says

Mr Riddel, "as to take the whole management of this concern; he was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to our little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit, and exertions for their improvement and information." *

Once, and only once, did Burns quit his residence at Elliesland to revisit Edinburgh. His object was to close accounts with Creech; that business accomplished, he returned immediately, and he never again saw the capital. He thus writes to Mrs Dunlop:—"To a man who has a home, however humble and remote, if that home is, like mine, the scene of domestic comfort, the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust—

‘Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you!’

“When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim, what merits had he had, or what demerits have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I kicked into the world, the sport of folly or the victim of pride often as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Prince’s Street, it has suggested itself to me as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective.” There is bitterness in this badinage.

* Letter to Sir John Sinclair, Bart. in the Statistical Account of Scotland, parish of Dunscore.

CHAPTER VIII.

**“ The King’s most humble servant, I
Can scarcely spare a minute ;
But I am yours at dinner-time,
Or else the devil’s in it.” ***

THE four principal biographers of our poet, Heron, Currie, Walker, and Irving, concur in the general statement, that his moral course from the time when he settled in Dumfries, was downwards. Heron knew more of the matter personally than any of the others, and his words are these :—
“ In Dumfries his dissipation became still more deeply habitual. He was here exposed more than in the country, to be solicited to share the riot of the dissolute and the idle. Foolish young men, such as writers’ apprentices, young surgeons, merchants’ clerks, and his brother excisemen, flocked eagerly about him, and from time to time pressed him to drink with them, that they might enjoy his wicked wit. The Caledonian Club, too, and the Dumfries and Galloway Hunt, had occasional meetings in Dumfries after Burns came to reside there, and the poet was of course invited to share their hospitality, and hesitated not to accept the invitation. The morals of the town were, in consequence of its becoming so much the scene of

* “ The above answer to an invitation was written extempore on a leaf torn from his Excise-book.” —Cromek’s *MSS.*

public amusement, not a little corrupted, and though a husband and a father, Burns did not escape suffering by the general contamination, in a manner which I forbear to describe. In the intervals between his different fits of intemperance, he suffered the keenest anguish of remorse and horribly afflictive foresight. His Jean behaved with a degree of maternal and conjugal tenderness and prudence, which made him feel more bitterly the evils of his misconduct, though they could not reclaim him."

This picture, dark as it is, wants some distressing shades that mingle in the parallel one by Dr Currie; it wants nothing, however, of which truth demands the insertion. That Burns, dissipated enough long ere he went to Dumfries, became still more dissipated in a town, than he had been in the country, is certain. It may also be true, that his wife had her own particular causes, sometimes, for dissatisfaction. But that Burns ever sunk into a toper—that he ever was addicted to solitary drinking—that his bottle ever interfered with his discharge of his duties as an exciseman—or that, in spite of some transitory follies, he ever ceased to be a most affectionate husband—all these charges have been insinuated—and they are all false. His intemperance was, as Heron says, in *fits*; his aberrations of all kinds were occasional not systematic; they were all to himself the sources of exquisite misery in the retrospect; they were the aberrations of a man whose moral sense was never deadened, of one who encountered more temptations from without and from within, than the immense majority of mankind, far from having to contend against, are even able to imagine;—of one, finally, who prayed for pardon, where alone effec-

tual pardon could be found ;—and who died ere he had reached that term of life up to which the passions of many, who, their mortal career being regarded as a whole, are honoured as among the most virtuous of mankind, have proved too strong for the control of reason. We have already seen that the poet was careful of decorum in all things during the brief space of his prosperity at Elliesland, and that he became less so on many points, as the prospects of his farming speculation darkened around him. It seems to be equally certain, that he entertained high hopes of promotion in the excise at the period of his removal to Dumfries ; and that the comparative recklessness of his later conduct there, was consequent on a certain overclouding of these professional expectations. The case is broadly stated so by Walker and Paul ; and there are hints to the same effect in the narrative of Currie.

The statement has no doubt been exaggerated, but it has its foundation in truth ; and by the kindness of Mr Train, supervisor at Castle Douglas in Galloway, I shall presently be enabled to give some details which may throw light on this business.

Burns was much patronised when in Edinburgh by the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, and other leading Whigs of the place—much more so, to their honour be it said, than by any of the influential adherents of the then administration. His landlord at Elliesland, Mr Miller of Dalswinton, his neighbour, Mr Riddel of Friars-Carse, and most of the other gentlemen who showed him special attention, belonged to the same political party ; and, on his removal to Dumfries, it so happened, that some of

his immediate superiors in the revenue service of the district, and other persons of standing and authority, into whose society he was thrown, entertained sentiments of the same description.

Burns, whenever in his letters he talks seriously of political matters, uniformly describes his early jacobitism as mere "matter of fancy." It may, however, be easily believed, that a fancy like his, long indulged in dreams of that sort, was well prepared to pass into certain other dreams which had, as calm men now view the matter, but little in common with them, except that both alike involved some feeling of dissatisfaction with "the existing order of things." Many of the old elements of political disaffection in Scotland, put on a new shape at the outbreaking of the French revolution; and jacobites became half-jacobins, ere they were at all aware in what the doctrines of jacobinism were to end. The Whigs naturally regarded the first dawn of freedom in France with feelings of sympathy, delight, exultation; in truth, few good men of any party regarded it with more of fear than of hope. The general, the all but universal tone of feeling was favourable to the first assailants of the Bourbon despotism; and there were few who more ardently participated in the general sentiment of the day than Burns.

The revulsion of feeling that took place in this country at large, when wanton atrocities began to stain the course of the French Revolution, and Burke lifted up his powerful voice to denounce its leaders, as, under pretence of love for freedom, the enemies of all social order, morality, and religion, was violent in proportion to the strength and ardour of the hopes in which good men had been eager to indulge, and cruelly disappointed. The great body

of the Whigs, however, were slow to abandon the cause which they had espoused ; and although their chiefs were wise enough to draw back when they at length perceived that serious plans for overturning the political institutions of our own country had been hatched and fostered, under the pretext of admiring and comforting the destroyers of a foreign tyranny—many of their provincial retainers, having uttered their sentiments all along with provincial vehemence and openness, found it no easy matter to retreat gracefully along with them. Scenes more painful at the time, and more so even now in the retrospect, than had for generations afflicted Scotland, were the consequences of the rancour into which party feelings on both sides now rose and fermented. Old and dear ties of friendship were torn in sunder ; society was for a time shaken to its centre. In the most extravagant dreams of the jacobites there had always been much to command respect, high chivalrous devotion, reverence for old affections, ancestral loyalty, and the generosity of romance. In the new species of hostility, everything seemed mean as well as perilous ; it was scorned even more than hated. The very name stained whatever it came near ; and men that had known and loved each other from boyhood, stood aloof, if this influence interfered, as if it had been some loathsome pestilence.

There was a great deal of stately Toryism at this time in the town of Dumfries, which was the favourite winter retreat of many of the best gentlemen's families of the south of Scotland. Feelings that worked more violently in Edinburgh than in London, acquired additional energy still, in this provincial capital. All men's eyes were upon *Burns*. He was the standing marvel of the place ;

his toasts, his jokes, his epigrams, his songs, were the daily food of conversation and scandal ; and he, open and careless, and thinking he did no great harm in saying and singing what many of his superiors had not the least objection to hear and applaud, soon began to be considered among the local admirers and disciples of the good old King and his minister, as the most dangerous of all the apostles of sedition,—and to be shunned accordingly.

A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me, that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer's evening, about this time, to attend a county-ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said, "Nay, nay, my young friend,—that's all over now ;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Bailie's pathetic ballad,—

" His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new ;
But now he lets't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.

" O were we young, as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it ower the lilywhite lea,—
And werena my heart light I wad dic."

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects, escape in this fashion. He,

immediately after citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably until the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potation, and Bonnie Jean's singing of some verses which he had recently composed. But this incident belongs, probably, to a somewhat later period of our poet's residence in Dumfries.

The records of the Excise-Office are silent concerning the suspicions which the Commissioners of the time certainly took up in regard to Burns as a political offender—according to the phraseology of the tempestuous period, a *democrat*. In that department, as then conducted, I am assured that nothing could have been more unlike the usual course of things, than that one syllable should have been set down in writing on such a subject, unless the case had been one of extremities. That an inquiry was instituted, we know from Burns's own letters—and what the exact termination of the inquiry was, can no longer, it is probable, be ascertained.

According to the tradition of the neighbourhood, Burns, *inter alia*, gave great offence by demurring in a large mixed company to the proposed toast, "the health of William Pitt;" and left the room in indignation, because the society rejected what he wished to substitute, namely, "the health of a greater and a better man, George Washington." I suppose the warmest admirer of Mr Pitt's talents and politics would hardly venture now-a-days to dissent substantially from Burns's estimate of the comparative merits of these two great men. The name of Washington, at all events, when contemporary passions shall have finally sunk into the

peace of the grave, will unquestionably have its place in the first rank of heroic virtue,—a station which demands the exhibition of victory pure and unstained over temptations and trials extraordinary, in kind as well as strength. But at the time when Burns, being a servant of Mr Pitt's government, was guilty of this indiscretion, it is obvious that a great deal "more was meant than reached the ear."

In the poet's own correspondence, we have traces of another occurrence of the same sort. Burns thus writes to a gentleman at whose table he had dined the day before:—"I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Captain ——— made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manner of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols: but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and children in a drunken squabble. Farther, you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread lest last night's business may be interpreted in the same way. You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mrs Burns's welfare with the task of waiting on every gentleman who was present to state this to him; and, as you please, show this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? *May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause*—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to."

Burns has been commended, sincerely by some,

and ironically by others, for putting up with the treatment which he received on this occasion, without calling Captain ——— to account the next morning; and one critic, the last I am sure that would have wished to say anything unkindly about the poet, has excited indignation in the breast of Mr Peterkin, by suggesting that Burns really had not, at any period of his life, those delicate feelings on certain matters, which, it must be admitted, no person in Burns's original rank and station is ever expected to act upon. The question may be safely intrusted to the good sense of all who can look to the case without passion or personal irritation. No human being will ever dream that Robert Burns was a coward: as for the poet's toast about the success of the war, there can be no doubt that only one meaning was given to it by all who heard it uttered; and as little that a gentleman bearing the King's commission in the army, if he was entitled to resent the sentiment at all, lost no part of his right to do so, because it was announced in a quibble.

Burns, no question, was guilty of unpoliteness as well as indiscretion, in offering any such toasts as these in mixed company; but that such toasts should have been considered as attaching any grave suspicion to his character as a loyal subject, is a circumstance which can only be accounted for by reference to the exaggerated state of political feelings on all matters, and among all descriptions of men, at that melancholy period of disaffection, distrust, and disunion. Who, at any other than that lamentable time, would ever have dreamed of erecting the drinking, or declining to drink, the health of a particular minister, or the approving, or disapproving, of a particular measure of government.

into the test of a man's loyalty to his King? The poet Crabbe has, in one of his masterly sketches, given us, perhaps, a more vivid delineation of the jarrings and collisions which were at this period the perpetual curse of society than the reader may be able to find elsewhere. He has painted the sturdy Tory mingling accidentally in a company of those who would not, like Burns, drink "the health of William Pitt;" and suffering sternly and sulkily under the infliction of their, to him, horrible doctrines

"Now, dinner past, no longer he suppress
His strong dislike to be a silent guest;
Subjects and words were now at his command—
When disappointment frown'd on all he plann'd.
For, hark! he heard, amazed, on every side,
His church insulted, and her priests belied,
The laws reviled, the ruling powers abused,
The land derided, and her foes excused—
He heard and ponder'd. What to men so vile
Should be his language? For his threatening style
They were too many. If his speech were meek,
They would despise such poor attempts to speak—
—There were reformers of each different sort,
Foes to the laws, the priesthood, and the court;
Some on their favourite plans alone intent,
Some purely angry and malevolent;
The rash were proud to blame their country's laws,
The vain to seem supporters of a cause;
One call'd for change that he would dread to see,
Another sigh'd for Gallic liberty;
And numbers joining with the forward crew,
For no one reason—but that many do—
—How, said the Justice, can this trouble rise—
This shame and pain, from creatures I despise?"—

And he has also presented the champion of loyalty as surrounded with kindred spirits, and amazed with the audacity of an intrusive democrat,

with whom he has now no more cause to keep terms than such gentlemen as "Captain ——" were wont to do with Robert Burns.

"Is it not known, agreed, confirm'd, confest,
That of all peoples we are govern'd best ?
—And live there those in such all-glorious state,
Traitors protected in the land they hate,
Rebels still warring with the laws that give
To them subsistence ?—Yes, such wretches live !
The laws that nursed them they blaspheme ; the laws—
Their Sovereign's glory—and their country's cause ;—
And who their mouth, their master fiend ; and who
Rebellion's oracle ?—You, caitiff, you !
—O could our country from her coasts expel
Such foes, and nourish those that wish her well !
This her mild laws forbid, but *we* may still
From *us* eject them by our sovereign will—
This let us do
He spoke, and, seated with his former air,
Look'd his full self, and fill'd his ample chair ;
Took one full bumper to each favourite cause,
And dwelt all night on politics and laws,
With high applauding voice which gain'd him high ap-
plause."

Burns, eager of temper, loud of tone, and with declamation and sarcasm equally at command, was, we may easily believe, the most hated of human beings, because the most dreaded, among the provincial champions of the administration of which he thought fit to disapprove. But that he ever, in his most ardent moods, upheld the principles of those whose applause of the French Revolution was but the mask of revolutionary designs at home, after these principles had been really developed by those that maintained them, and understood by him, it may be safely denied. There is not, in all his correspondence, one syllable to give countenance to *such a charge*.

His indiscretion, however, did not always confine itself to words ; and though an incident now about to be recorded, belongs to the year 1792, before the French war broke out, there is reason to believe that it formed the main subject of the inquiry which the Excise Commissioners thought themselves called upon to institute touching the politics of our poet.

At that period a great deal of contraband traffic, chiefly from the Isle of Man, was going on along the coasts of Galloway and Ayrshire, and the whole of the revenue officers from Gretna to Dumfries, were placed under the orders of a superintendent residing in Annan, who exerted himself zealously in intercepting the descent of the smuggling vessels. On the 27th of February, a suspicious-looking brig was discovered in the Solway Frith, and Burns was one of the party whom the superintendent conducted to watch her motions. She got into shallow water the day afterwards, and the officers were enabled to discover that her crew were numerous, armed, and not likely to yield without a struggle. Lewars, a brother exciseman, an intimate friend of our poet, was accordingly sent to Dumfries for a guard of dragoons ; the superintendent, Mr Crawford, proceeded himself on a similar errand to Ecclefechan, and Burns was left with some men under his orders, to watch the brig, and prevent landing or escape. From the private journal of one of the excisemen, (now in my hands,) it appears that Burns manifested considerable impatience while thus occupied, being left for many hours in a wet salt-marsh, with a force which he *knew* to be inadequate for the purpose it was *meant* to fulfil. One of his comrades hearing him *abuse* his friend Lewars in particular, for being

slow about his journey, the man answered, that he also wished the devil had him for his pains; and that Burns, in the meantime, would do well to indite a song upon the sluggard: Burns said nothing; but after taking a few strides by himself among the reeds and shingle, rejoined his party, and chanted to them the well-known ditty, *The Deil's run awa' wi' the Exciseman*.* Lewars arrived shortly afterwards with his dragoons; and Burns, putting himself at their head, waded, sword in hand, to the brig, and was the first to board her. The crew lost heart, and submitted, though their numbers were greater than those of the assailing force. The vessel was condemned, and, with all her arms and stores, sold by auction next day at Dumfries: upon which occasion, Burns, whose behaviour had been highly commended, thought fit to purchase four carronades, by way of trophy. But his glee went a step farther;—he sent the guns, with a letter, to the French Convention, requesting that body to accept of them as a mark of his admiration and respect. The present, and its accompaniment, were intercepted at the custom-house at Dover; and here, there appears to be little room to doubt, was the principal circumstance that drew on Burns the notice of his jealous superiors.

We were not, it is true, at war with France; but every one knew and felt that we were to be so ere long; and nobody can pretend that Burns was not guilty, on this occasion, of a most absurd and presumptuous breach of decorum.

* The account in the *Reliques* of this song being composed for “a festive meeting of all the Excise-officers, in Scotland,” is therefore incorrect. Mr Train, moreover, assures me, that there never was any such meeting.

When he learned the impression that had been created by his conduct, and its probable consequences, he wrote to his patron, Mr Graham of Fintray, the following letter :—

“ December 1792.

“ SIR, I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government. Sir, you are a husband and a father. You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced, from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas! sir, must I think that such soon will be my lot? and from the damned dark insinuations of hellish, groundless envy too? I believe, sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head. And I say that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie. To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next, after my God, I am most devoutly attached. You, sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you. Fortune, sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not, for my single *self*, call on your humanity: were such my insular, *unconnected* situation, I would disperse the tear

that now swells in my eye ; I could brave misfortune ; I could face ruin ; at the worst, ‘ death’s thousand doors stand open.’ But, good God ! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve courage and wither resolution ! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim ; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due. To these, sir, permit me to appeal. By these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me ; and which, with my latest breath I will say, I have not deserved !”

On the 2d of January, (a week or two afterwards) we find him writing to Mrs Dunlop in these terms :—(The good lady had been offering him some interest with the Excise board in the view of promotion.) “ Mr C. can be of little service to me at present ; at least, I should be shy of applying. I cannot probably be settled as a supervisor for several years. I must wait the rotation of lists, &c. Besides, some envious malicious devil has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my superiors. I have set henceforth a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics ; but to you I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in everything else, I shall show the undisguised emotions of my soul. War, I deprecate : misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But——”

“ The remainder of this letter,” says Cromek, “ has been torn away by some barbarous hand.” I can have no doubt that it was torn away by one

of the kindest hands in the world—that of Mrs Dunlop herself.

The exact result of the Excise Board's investigation is hidden, as has been said above, in obscurity; nor is it at all likely that the cloud will be withdrawn hereafter. A general impression, however, appears to have gone forth, that the affair terminated in something which Burns himself considered as tantamount to the destruction of all hope of future promotion in his profession; and it has been insinuated by almost every one of his biographers, that the crushing of these hopes operated unhappily, even fatally, on the tone of his mind, and, in consequence, on the habits of his life. In a word, the early death of Burns has been (by implication at least) ascribed mainly to the circumstances in question. Even Sir Walter Scott has distinctly intimated his acquiescence in this prevalent notion. "The political predilections," says he, "for they could hardly be termed principles, of Burns, were entirely determined by his feelings. At his first appearance, he felt, or affected, a propensity to Jacobitism. Indeed, a youth of his warm imagination in Scotland thirty years ago,* could hardly escape this bias. The side of Charles Edward was that, not surely of sound sense and sober reason, but of romantic gallantry and high achievement. The inadequacy of the means by which that prince attempted to regain the crown forfeited by his fathers, the strange and almost poetical adventures which he underwent,—the Scottish martial character, honoured in his victories, and degraded and crushed in his defeat,—the tales of the veterans who had followed his adventurous stand-

* Quarterly Review for February 1809.

ard, were all calculated to impress upon the mind of a poet a warm interest in the cause of the House of Stuart. Yet the impression was not of a very serious cast; for Burns himself acknowledges in one of his letters, (Reliques, p. 240,) that 'to tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*.' The same enthusiastic ardour of disposition swayed Burns in his choice of political tenets, when the country was agitated by revolutionary principles. That the poet should have chosen the side on which high talents were most likely to procure celebrity; that he to whom the fastidious distinctions of society were always odious, should have listened with complacency to the voice of French philosophy, which denounced them as usurpations on the rights of man, was precisely the thing to be expected. Yet we cannot but think, that if his superiors in the Excise department had tried the experiment of soothing rather than irritating his feelings, they might have spared themselves the *disgrace* of rendering desperate the possessor of such uncommon talents. For it is *but too certain*, that from the moment his hopes of promotion were utterly blasted, his tendency to dissipation hurried him precipitately into those excesses which shortened his life. We doubt not, that in that awful period of national discord, he had done and said enough to deter, in ordinary cases, the servants of government from countenancing an avowed partizan of faction. But this partizan was Burns! Surely the experiment of lenity might have been tried, and perhaps successfully. The conduct of Mr Graham of Fintray, our poet's only shield against actual

dismissal and consequent ruin, reflects the highest credit on that gentleman."

In the general strain of sentiment in this passage, who can refuse to concur? but I am bound to say, that after a careful examination of all the documents, printed and MS., to which I have had access, I have great doubts as to some of the principal facts assumed in the eloquent statement. I have before me, for example, a letter of Mr Findlater, formerly Collector at Glasgow, who was, at the period in question, Burns's immediate superior in the Dumfries district, in which that very respectable person distinctly says:—"I may venture to assert, that when Burns was accused of a leaning to democracy, and an inquiry into his conduct took place, he was subjected, in consequence thereof, to no more than perhaps a verbal or private caution to be more circumspect in future. Neither do I believe his promotion was thereby affected, as has been stated. That, had he lived, would, I have every reason to think, have gone on in the usual routine. His good and steady friend Mr Graham would have attended to this. What cause, therefore, was there for depression of spirits on this account? or how should he have been hurried thereby to a premature grave? I never saw his spirit fail till he was borne down by the pressure of disease and bodily weakness; and even then it would occasionally revive, and like an expiring lamp, emit bright flashes to the last."*

When the war had fairly broken out, a battalion of volunteers was formed in Dumfries, and Burns was an original member of the corps. It is very true that his accession was objected to by

* Letter to Donald Horne, Esq. W. S. Edinburgh.

some of his neighbours ; but these were over-ruled by the gentlemen who took the lead in the business, and the poet soon became, as might have been expected, the greatest possible favourite with his brothers in arms. His commanding officer, Colonel De Peyster, attests his zealous discharge of his duties as a member of the corps ; and their attachment to him was on the increase to the last. He was their laureate, and in that capacity did more good service to the government of the country, at a crisis of the darkest alarm and danger, than perhaps any one person of his rank and station, with the exception of Dibdin, had the power or the inclination to render. " Burns," says Allan Cunningham, " was a zealous lover of his country, and has stamped his patriotic feelings in many a lasting verse. . . . His *poor and honest Sodger* laid hold at once on the public feeling, and it was everywhere sung with an enthusiasm which only began to abate when Campbell's *Exile of Erin* and *Wounded Hussar* were published. Dumfries, which sent so many of her sons to the wars, rung with it from port to port ; and the poet, wherever he went, heard it echoing from house and hall. I wish this exquisite and useful song, with *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*,—the *Song of Death*, and *Does haughty Gaul Invasion Threat*—all lyrics which enforce a love of country, and a martial enthusiasm into men's breasts, had obtained some reward for the poet. His perishable conversation was remembered by the rich to his prejudice—his imperishable lyrics were rewarded only by the admiration and tears of his fellow peasants."

Lastly, whatever the rebuke of the Excise Board amounted to—(Mr James Gray, at that time

schoolmaster in Dumfries, and seeing much of Burns both as the teacher of his children, and as a personal friend and associate of literary taste and talent, is the only person who gives anything like an exact statement; and according to him, Burns was admonished "that it was his business to act, not to think")—in whatever language the censure was clothed, the Excise Board did nothing from which Burns had any cause to suppose that his hopes of ultimate promotion were extinguished. Nay, if he had taken up such a notion, rightly or erroneously, Mr Findlater, who had him constantly under his eye, and who enjoyed all his confidence, and who enjoyed then, as he still enjoys, the utmost confidence of the Board, must have known the fact to be so. Such, I cannot help thinking, is the fair view of the case: at all events, we know that Burns, the year before he died, was permitted to *act* as a *Supervisor*; a thing not likely to have occurred had there been any resolution against promoting him in his proper order to a permanent situation of that superior rank.

On the whole, then, I am of opinion that the Excise Board have been dealt with harshly, when men of eminence have talked of their conduct to Burns as affixing *disgrace* to them. It appears that Burns, being guilty unquestionably of great indiscretion and indecorum both of word and deed, was admonished in a private manner, that at such a period of national distraction, it behoved a public officer, gifted with talents and necessarily with influence like his, very carefully to abstain from conduct which, now that passions have had time to cool, no sane man will say became his situation; that Burns's subsequent conduct effaced the unfavourable impression created in the minds of his

superiors; and that he had begun to taste the fruits of their recovered approbation and confidence, ere his career was closed by illness and death. These Commissioners of Excise were themselves subordinate officers of the government, and strictly responsible for those under them. That they did try the experiment of lenity to a certain extent, appears to be made out; that *they* could have been justified in trying it to a farther extent, is at the least doubtful. But with regard to the government of the country itself, I must say I think it is much more difficult to defend them. Mr Pitt's ministry gave Dibdin a pension of L.200 a-year for writing his *Sea Songs*;* and one cannot help remembering, that when Burns did begin to excite the ardour and patriotism of his countrymen by such songs as Mr Cunningham has been alluding to, there were persons who had every opportunity of representing to the Premier the claims of a greater than Dibdin. Lenity, indulgence, to whatever length carried in such quarters as these, would have been at once safe and graceful. What the minor politicians of the day thought of Burns's poetry I know not; but Mr Pitt himself appreciated it as highly as any man. "I can think of no verse," said the great Minister, when Burns was no more—"I can think of no verse since Shakspeare's, that has so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature."†

* By the way, Mr Fox's ministry gained no credit by diminishing Dibdin's pension during their brief sway, by one-half.

† I am assured that Mr Pitt used these words at the table of the late Lord Liverpool, soon after Burns's death. How that *event* might come to be a natural topic at that table, will be seen in the sequel.

Had Burns put forth some newspaper squibs upon Lepaux or Carnot, or a smart pamphlet "On the State of the Country," he might have been more attended to in his lifetime. It is common to say, "what is everybody's business is nobody's business;" but one may be pardoned for thinking that in such cases as this, that which the general voice of the country does admit to be everybody's business, comes in fact to be the business of those whom the nation intrusts with national concerns.

To return to Sir Walter Scott's reviewal—it seems that he has somewhat overstated the political indiscretions of which Burns was actually guilty. Let us hear the counter-statement of Mr Gray, who, as has already been mentioned, enjoyed Burns's intimacy and confidence during his residence at Dumfries.—No one who knows anything of that excellent man, will for a moment suspect him of giving any other than what he believes to be true.

"Burns (says he) was enthusiastically fond of liberty, and a lover of the popular part of our constitution; but he saw and admired the just and delicate proportions of the political fabric, and nothing could be farther from his aim than to level with the dust the venerable pile reared by the labours and the wisdom of ages. That provision of the constitution, however, by which it is made to contain a self-correcting principle, obtained no inconsiderable share of his admiration: he was, therefore, a zealous advocate of constitutional reform. The necessity of this he often supported in conversation with all the energy of an irresistible eloquence; but there is no evidence that he ever went farther. He was a member of no political

club. At the time when, in certain societies, the mad cry of revolution was raised from one end of the kingdom to the other, his voice was never heard in their debates, nor did he ever support their opinions in writing, or correspond with them in any form whatever. Though limited to an income which any other man would have considered poverty, he refused L.50 a-year offered to him for a weekly article, by the proprietors of an opposition paper; and two reasons, equally honourable to him, induced him to reject this proposal. His independent spirit spurned the idea of becoming the hireling of a party; and whatever may have been his opinion of the men and measures that then prevailed, he did not think it right to fetter the operations of that government by which he was employed."

In strong confirmation of the first part of this statement by Mr Gray,* we have the following extract from the poet's own private diary, never, in all human probability, designed to meet the public eye.—"Whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, I ever abjured the idea of such changes here. A constitution which, in its original principles, experience has proved to be every way fitted for our happiness, it would be insanity to abandon for an untried visionary theory." This surely is not the language of one of those who then said and sung broadly and boldly

"Of old things all are over old;
Of good things none are good enough;
We'll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff."

* Mr Gray removed from the school of Dumfries to the High School of Edinburgh, in which eminent seminary he for many years laboured with distinguished success. He

As to the delicate and intricate question of Parliamentary Reform—it is to be remembered that Mr Pitt advocated that measure at the outset of his career, and never abandoned the principle, although the events of his time were too well fitted to convince him of the inexpediency of making any further attempts at carrying it into practice ; and it is also to be considered that Burns, in his humble and remote situation, was much more likely to seize right principles, than to judge of the safety or expediency of carrying them into effect.

The statement about the newspaper, refers to Mr Perry of the Morning Chronicle, who, at the suggestion of Mr Miller of Dalswinton, made the proposal referred to, and received for answer a letter which may be seen in the General Correspondence of our poet, and the tenor of which is in accordance with what Mr Gray has said. Mr Perry afterwards pressed Burns to settle in London as a regular writer for his paper, and the poet declined to do so, alleging that, however small, his Excise appointment was a certainty, which, in justice to his family, he could not think of abandoning.*

In conclusion, Burns's abstinence from the political clubs, and affiliated societies of that disastrous period, is a circumstance, the importance of which will be appreciated by all who know anything of the machinery by which the real revolutionists of the æra designed, and endeavoured, to carry their purposes into execution.

Burns, after the Excise inquiry, took care, no then became Professor of Latin in the Institution at Belfast, and is now in holy orders, and a chaplain of the East India Company in the presidency of Madras.

* This is stated on the authority of Major Miller.

doubt, to avoid similar scrapes ; but he had no reluctance to meddle largely and zealously in the squabbles of county politics and contested elections ; and thus, by merely espousing, on all occasions, the cause of the Whig candidates, kept up very effectually the spleen which the Tories had originally conceived on tolerably legitimate grounds. Of his political verses, written at Dumfries, hardly any specimens have as yet appeared in print ; it would be easy to give many of them, but perhaps some of the persons lashed and ridiculed are still alive—their children certainly are so.

One of the most celebrated of these effusions, and one of the most quotable, was written on a desperately contested election for the Dumfries district of boroughs, between Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, and Mr Miller, the younger, of Dalswinton ; Burns, of course, maintaining the cause of his patron's family. There is much humour in

THE FIVE CARLINES.

1. There were five carlines in the south, they fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to Lunnun town to bring them tidings hame,
Nor only bring them tidings hame, but do their errands there,
And aiblins gowd and honour baith might be that laddie's share.
2. There was Maggy by the banks o' Nith,* a dame wi' pride eneugh,
And Marjory o' the Monylochs,† a carline auld and teugh ;
And blinkin Bess o' Annandale, ‡ that dwelt near Solway-side,
And whisky Jean that took her gill in Galloway sae wide ; §
And black Joán frae Crichton Peel, || o' gipsy kith and kin,—
Five wighter carlines war na foun' the south countrie within.

* *Dumfries.*

§ *Kirkcudbright.*

† *Lochmaben.*

|| *Sanquhar.*

‡ *Annan.*

3. To send a lad to Lunnun town, they met upon a day,
And mony a knight and mony a laird their errand fain wad
gae,

But nae ane could their fancy please; One'er a ane but tway.

4. The first he was a belted knight,* bred o' a border clan,
And he wad gae to Lunnun town, might nae man him
withstan',

And he wad do their errands weel, and meikle he wad say,
And ilka ane at Lunnun court would bid to him gude day.

5. The next came in a sodger youth,† and spak wi' modest
grace,

And he wad gae to Lunnun town if sae their pleasure was;
He wadna hecht them courtly gifts, nor meikle speech
pretend,

But he wad hecht an honest heart, wad ne'er desert a friend.

6. Now, wham to choose and wham refuse, at strife thir car-
lines fell,

For some had gentle folks to please, and some wad please
themsell.

7. Then out spak mim-mou'd Meg o' Nith, and she spak
up wi' pride,

And she wad send the sodger youth, whatever might betide;
For the auld guidman o' Lunnun ‡ court she didna care a
pin;

But she wad send the soger youth to greet his eldest son. §

8. Then up sprang Bess o' Annandale, and a deadly aith
she's taen,

That she wad vote the border knight, though she should vote
her lane;

For far-aff fowls hae feathers fair, and fools o' change are
fain;

But I hae tried the border knight, and I'll try him yet again.

9. Says black Joán frae Crichton Peel, a carline stoor and
grim,

The auld guidman, and the young guidman, for me may
sink or swim;

For fools will freat o' right or wrang, while knaves laugh
them to scorn;

But the sodger's friends hae blawn the best, so he shall bear
the horn.

* Sir J. Johnstone.

‡ George III.

† Major Miller.

§ The Prince of Wales.

10. Then whisky Jean spak ower her drink, Ye weel ken,
 kimmers a',
 The auld guidman o' Lunnun court, his back's been at the wa';
 And mony a friend that kiss't his cup, is now a fremit wight,
 But it's ne'er be said o' whisky Jean—I'll send the border
 knight.
11. Then slow raise Marjory o' the Lochs, and wrinkled
 was her brow,
 Her ancient weed was russet gray, her auld Scots bluid was
 true;
 There's some great folks set light by me,—I set as light by
 them;
 But I will sen' to Lunnun toun wham I like best at hame.
12. Sae how this weighty plea may end, nae mortal wight
 can tell,
 God grant the King and ilka man may look weel to himsell."

The above is far the best humoured of these productions. The election to which it refers was carried in Major Miller's favour, but after a severe contest, and at a very heavy expense.

These political conflicts were not to be mingled in with impunity by the chosen laureate, wit, and orator of the district. He himself, in an unpublished piece, speaks of the terror excited by

" — Burns's venom, when
 He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,
 And pours his vengeance in the burning line ;"

and represents his victims, on one of these electioneering occasions, as leading a choral shout that

" — He for his heresies in church and state,
 Might richly merit Muir's and Palmer's fate."

But what rendered him more and more the object of aversion to one set of people, was sure to connect him more and more strongly with the passions,* and, unfortunately for himself and for us,

* " Lord Frederick heard of all his youthful zeal,
 And felt as lords upon a canvass feel ;

with the pleasures of the other ; and we have, among many confessions to the same purpose, the following, which I quote as the shortest, in one of the poet's letters from Dumfries to Mrs Dunlop. " I am better, but not quite free of my complaint, (he refers to the palpitation of heart.) You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life, I want exercise. Of that I have enough ; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me." He knew well what he was doing whenever he mingled in such debaucheries : he had, long ere this, described himself as parting " with a slice of his constitution" every time he was guilty of such excess.

This brings us back to a subject on which it can give no one pleasure to expatiate. As has been already sufficiently intimated, the statements of Heron and Currie on this head, still more those of Mr Walker and Dr Irving, are not to be received without considerable deduction. No one of these biographers appears to have had any considerable intercourse with Burns during the latter years of his life, which they have represented in such dark colours every way ; and the two survivors of their number are, I doubt not, among those who must have heard, with the highest satisfaction, the counter-statements which their narratives were the means of calling forth from men as well qualified

He read the satire, and he saw the use,
That such cool insult and such keen abuse
Might on the wavering minds of voting men produce.
I much rejoice, he cried, such worth to find ;
To this the world must be no longer blind.
His glory will descend from sire to son,
The Burns of English race, the happier Chatterton."
CRABBE, in the Patron.

as themselves in point of character and attainment, and much more so in point of circumstance and opportunity, to ascertain and estimate the real facts of a case, which is, at the best, a sufficiently melancholy one.

“Dr Currie,” says Gilbert Burns,* “knowing the events of the latter years of my brother’s life, only from the reports which had been propagated, and thinking it necessary, lest the candour of his work should be called in question, to state the substance of these reports, has given a very exaggerated view of the failings of my brother’s life at that period—which is certainly to be regretted.”

“I love Dr Currie,” says the Reverend James Gray, already more than once referred to, “but I love the memory of Burns more, and no consideration shall deter me from a bold declaration of the truth. The poet of the *Cottar’s Saturday Night*, who felt all the charms of the humble piety and virtue which he sung, is charged, (in Dr Currie’s Narrative,) with vices which would reduce him to a level with the most degraded of his species.—As I knew him during that period of his life emphatically called his evil days, *I am enabled to speak from my own observation*. It is not my intention to extenuate his errors, because they were combined with genius; on that account, they were only the more dangerous, because the more seductive, and deserve the more severe reprehension; but I shall likewise claim that nothing may be said in malice even against him. . . . It came under my own view professionally, that he superintended the education of his children with a degree of care that I have never seen surpassed by any

* Letter to Mr Peterkin. (Peterkin’s Preface, p. 82.)

ment for delicacy, taste, and genius. They were proud of his friendship, and cherished him to the last moment of his existence. He was endeared to them even by his misfortunes, and they still retain for his memory that affectionate veneration which virtue alone inspires." *

Part of Mr Gray's letter is omitted, only because it touches on subjects, as to which Mr Findlater's statement must be considered as of not merely sufficient, but the very highest authority.

"My connexion with Robert Burns," says that most respectable man,† "commenced immediately after his admission into the Excise, and continued to the hour of his death.‡ In all that time, the superintendence of his behaviour, as an officer of the revenue, was a branch of my especial province, and it may be supposed I would not be an inattentive observer of the *general* conduct of a man and a poet, so celebrated by his countrymen. In the former capacity, he was exemplary in his attention; and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance: as a proof of which, it may not be foreign to the subject to quote a part of a letter from him to myself, in a case of only *seeming* inattention.— 'I know, sir, and regret deeply, that this business glances with a malign aspect on my character as an officer; but, as I am really innocent in the affair, and as the gentleman is known to be an illicit dealer, and particularly as this is the *single* instance of the least shadow of carelessness or impropriety in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall a sacrifice to the dark manœuvres of a smuggler.'—This of itself

* Letter in Mr Peterkin's preface, pp. 93—95.

† Ibid. p. 93—96.

‡ Mr Findlater watched by Burns the night before he died.

teresting and delightful. I may likewise add, that to the very end of his life, reading was his favourite amusement. I have never known any man so intimately acquainted with the elegant English authors. He seemed to have the poets by heart. The prose authors he could quote either in their own words, or clothe their ideas in language more beautiful than their own. Nor was there ever any decay in any of the powers of his mind. To the last day of his life, his judgment, his memory, his imagination, were fresh and vigorous, as when he composed the *Cottar's Saturday Night*. The truth is, that Burns was seldom *intoxicated*. The drunkard soon becomes besotted, and is shunned even by the convivial. Had he been so, he could not long have continued the idol of every party. It will be freely confessed, that the hour of enjoyment was often prolonged beyond the limit marked by prudence ; but what man will venture to affirm, that in situations where he was conscious of giving so much pleasure, he could at all times have listened to her voice ?

“ The men with whom he generally associated, were not of the lowest order. He numbered among his intimate friends, many of the most respectable inhabitants of Dumfries and the vicinity. Several of those were attached to him by ties that the hand of calumny, busy as it was, could never snap asunder. They admired the poet for his genius, and loved the man for the candour, generosity, and kindness of his nature. His early friends clung to him through good and bad report, with a zeal and fidelity that prove their disbelief of the malicious stories circulated to his disadvantage. Among them were some of the most distinguished characters in this country, and not a few females, emi-

Professor Walker took care, ere they penned their painful pages, to converse and correspond with other persons than the enemies of the deceased poet—Here, then, as in most other cases of similar controversy, the fair and equitable conclusion would seem to be, “truth lies between.”

To whatever Burns's excesses amounted, they were, it is obvious, and that frequently, the subject of rebuke and remonstrance even from his own dearest friends—even from men who had no sort of objection to potations deep enough in all conscience. That such reprimands, giving shape and form to the thoughts that tortured his own bosom, should have been received at times with a strange mixture of remorse and indignation, none that have considered the nervous susceptibility and haughtiness of Burns's character can hear with surprise. But this was only when the good advice was oral.*

* A statement, of an isolated character, in the *Quarterly Review*, (No. I.) has been noticed at much length, and in very intemperate language, by Mr Peterkin, in the preface from which the above letters of Messrs Gray and Findlater are extracted. I am sure that nothing could have been further from the writer's wishes than to represent anything to Burns's disadvantage; but the reader shall judge for himself. The passage in the critique alluded to is as follows:—“Bred a peasant, and preferred to the degrading situation of a common exciseman, neither the influence of the low-minded crew around him, nor the gratification of selfish indulgence, nor that contempt of futurity which has characterised so many of his poetical brethren, ever led him to incur or endure the burden of pecuniary obligation. A very intimate friend of the poet, from whom he used occasionally to borrow a small sum for a week or two, once ventured to hint that the punctuality with which the loan was always replaced at the appointed time was unnecessary and unkind. The consequence of this hint was, the interruption of their friendship for some weeks, the bard disdaining the very thought of being indebted to a human being one farthing beyond

No one knew better than he how to answer the written homilies of such persons as were most likely to take the freedom of admonishing him on

what he could discharge with the most rigid punctuality. It was a less pleasing consequence of this high spirit, that Burns was inaccessible to all friendly advice. To lay before him his errors, or to point out their consequences, was to touch a string that jarred every feeling within him. On such occasions his, like Churchill's, was

'The mind which starting heaves the heartfelt groan,
And hates the form she knows to be her own.'

"It is a dreadful truth, that when racked and tortured by the well-meant and warm expostulations of an intimate friend, he started up in a paroxysm of frenzy, and drawing a sword-cane which he usually wore, made an attempt to plunge it into the body of his adviser—the next instant he was with difficulty withheld from suicide."^{*}

In reply to this paragraph, Mr Peterkin says, † "The friend here referred to, Mr John Syme, in a written statement now before us, gives an account of this murderous-looking story, which we shall transcribe *verbatim*, that the nature of this *attempt* may be precisely known. 'In my parlour at Ryedale, one *afternoon*, Burns and I were very *gracious* and confidential. I did advise him to be temperate in all things. *I might have spoken daggers*, but I did not mean them. *He shook to the inmost fibre of his frame, and drew the sword-cane*, when I exclaimed, 'What! wilt thou thus, and in my own house?' The poor fellow was so stung with remorse, that he dashed himself down on the floor.'—And this is gravely laid before the world at second-hand, as an *attempt* by Burns to murder a friend, and to commit suicide, from which 'he was with difficulty withheld!' So much for the manner of telling a story. The whole amount of it, by Mr Syme's account, and none else can be correct, seems to be, that being 'gracious' one afternoon, (perhaps a little 'glorious' too, according to Tam o' Shanter,) he, in his own house, thought fit to give Burns a lecture on temperance in all things; in the course of which he acknowledges that he '*might have spoken daggers*'—and that Burns, in

^{*} Quarterly Review. No. 1. p. 28.

† Peterkin's Preface, p. 65.

points of such delicacy ; nor is there anything in all his correspondence more amusing than his reply to a certain solemn lecture of William Nicoll,

a moment of irritation, perhaps of justly offended pride, merely *drew* the sword (which, like every other excise-officer, he wore *at all times* professionally in a staff,) in order, as a soldier would touch his sword, to repel indignity. But by Mr Syme's own testimony, Burns only *drew* the sword from the cane : nothing is said of an *attempt* to stab ; but on the contrary, Mr Syme declares expressly that a mock-solemn *exclamation*, pretty characteristic, we suspect, of the whole affair, wound up the catastrophe of this tragical scene. Really it is a foolish piece of business to magnify such an incident into a 'dreadful truth,' illustrative of the 'untamed and plebeian' spirit of Burns. We cannot help regretting that Mr Syme should unguardedly have communicated such an anecdote to any of his friends, considering that this ebullition of momentary irritation was followed, as he himself states, by a friendship more ardent than ever betwixt him and Burns. He should have been aware, that the story, when told again and again by others, would be twisted and tortured into the scandalous form which it at last assumed in the Quarterly Review. The antics of a good man in the delirium of a fever, might with equal propriety be narrated in blank verse, as a proof that he was a bad man when in perfect health. A momentary gust of passion, excited by acknowledged provocation, and followed by nothing but drawing or brandishing a weapon accidentally in his hand, and an immediate and strong conviction that even this was a great error, cannot, without the most outrageous violence of construction, be tortured into an attempt to commit murder and suicide. All the artifice of language, too, is used to give a horrible impression of Burns. The sword-cane is spoken of without explanation as a thing 'which he usually wore,'—as if he had habitually carried the concealed stiletto of an assassin : The reviewer should have been much more on his guard."

The reader may probably be of opinion, upon candidly considering and comparing the statements of the reviewer and the re-reviewer ;—1st, That the facts of the case are in the two stories substantially the same ; 2dly, That when the reviewer spoke of Burns's sword-cane as a weapon which

the same exemplary schoolmaster who "brewed the peck o' mant which

Rob and Allan came to pree."

... "O thou, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors ! how infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy supereminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions ! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs and master of maxims, that antipode of folly, and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willy Nicoll ! Amen ! amen ! Yea, so be it !

"For me ! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing !" &c. &c. &c.

To how many that have moralized over the life and death of Burns, might not such a *Tu quoque* be addressed !

he "*usually wore*," he did mean "which he wore in *his capacity of Exciseman* ;" 3dly, That Mr Syme ought never to have told the story, nor the reviewer to have published it, nor the re-reviewer to have given it additional importance by his attempt to explain into nothing what in reality amounted to little. Burns was, according to Mr Peterkin's story, "glorious" at the time when the incident occurred ; and if there was no harm at all in what he did in that moment of unfortunate excitement and irritation, what means Mr Syme's own language about "the poor fellow being stung with remorse ?" &c.

The strongest argument in favour of those who denounce the statements of Heron, Currie, and their fellow biographers, concerning the habits of the poet, during the latter years of his career, as culpably and egregiously exaggerated, still remains to be considered. On the whole, Burns gave satisfaction by his manner of executing the duties of his station in the revenue service; he, moreover, as Mr Gray tells us, (and upon this ground Mr Gray could not possibly be mistaken,) took a lively interest in the education of his children, and spent more hours in their private tuition than fathers who have more leisure than his excisemanship left him, are often in the custom of so bestowing;* and,

* "He was a kind and attentive father, and took great delight in spending his evenings in the cultivation of the minds of his children. Their education was the grand object of his life, and he did not, like most parents, think it sufficient to send them to public schools; he was their private instructor, and even at that early age, bestowed great pains in training their minds to habits of thought and reflection, and in keeping them pure from every form of vice. This he considered as a sacred duty, and never, to the period of his last illness, relaxed in his diligence. With his eldest son, a boy of not more than nine years of age, he had read many of the favourite poets, and some of the best historians in our language; and what is more remarkable, gave him considerable aid in the study of Latin. This boy attended the Grammar School of Dumfries, and soon attracted my notice by the strength of his talent, and the ardour of his ambition. Before he had been a year at school, I thought it right to advance him a form, and he began to read Cæsar, and gave me translations of that author of such beauty as I confess surprised me. On inquiry, I found that his father made him turn over his dictionary, till he was able to translate to him the passage in such a way that he could gather the author's meaning, and that it was to him he owed that polished and forcible English with which I was so greatly struck. I have mentioned this incident merely to show what minute attention he paid to this important branch of parental duty." —*Let.*

lastly, although he to all men's regret executed, after his removal to Dumfries-shire, no more than one poetical piece of considerable length, (*Tam o' Shanter*,) his epistolary correspondence, and his songs contributed to Johnson's Museum, and to the great collection of Mr George Thomson, furnish undeniable proof that, in whatever fits of dissipation he unhappily indulged, he never could possibly have sunk into anything like that habitual grossness of manners and sottish degradation of mind, which the writers in question have not hesitated to hold up to the deepest commiseration, if not more than this, of mankind.

Of his letters written at Elliesland and Dumfries, nearly three octavo volumes have been already printed by Currie and Cromek; and it would be easy to swell the collection to double this extent. Enough, however, has been published to enable every reader to judge for himself of the character of Burns's style of epistolary composition. The severest criticism bestowed on it has been, that it is too elaborate—that, however natural the feelings, the expression is frequently more studied and artificial than belongs to that species of composition. Be this remark altogether just in point of taste, or otherwise, the fact on which it is founded, furnishes strength to our present position. The poet produced in these years a great body of elaborate prose-writing.

We have already had occasion to notice some of his contributions to Johnson's Museum. He continued to the last month of his life, to take a lively interest in that work; and besides writing for it some dozens of excellent original songs, his diligence

ter from the Reverend James Gray to Mr Gilbert Burns. See his Edition, vol. 1. Appendix, No. v.

in collecting ancient pieces hitherto unpublished, and his taste and skill in eking out fragments, were largely, and most happily exerted, all along, for its benefit. Mr Cromek saw among Johnson's papers, no fewer than 184 of the pieces which enter into the collection, in Burns's handwriting.*

His connexion with the more important work of Mr Thomson commenced in September 1792 ; and Mr Gray justly says, that whoever considers his correspondence with the editor, and the collection itself, must be satisfied, that from that time till the commencement of his last illness, not many days ever passed over his head without the production of some new stanzas for its pages. Besides old materials, for the most part embellished with lines, if not verses of his own, and a whole body of hints, suggestions, and criticisms, Burns gave Mr Thomson about sixty original songs. It is, however, but justice to poor Heron to add, that comparatively few of this number had been made public at the time when he drew up that rash and sweeping statement, which Dr Currie adhered to in some particulars without sufficient inquiry.

The songs in this collection are by many eminent critics placed decidedly at the head of all our poet's performances : it is by none disputed that very many of them are worthy of his most felicitous inspiration. He bestowed much more care on them than on his contributions to the Museum ; and the taste and feeling of the editor secured the work against any intrusions of that overwarm element which was too apt to mingle in his amatory effusions. Burns knew that he was now

* Reliques, p. 185.

engaged on a work destined for the eye and ear of refinement; he laboured throughout, under the salutary feeling, "*virginibus puerisque canto*;" and the consequences have been happy indeed for his own fame—for the literary taste, and the national music, of Scotland; and, what is of far higher importance, the moral and national feelings of his countrymen.

In almost all these productions—certainly in all that deserve to be placed in the first rank of his compositions—Burns made use of his native dialect. He did so, too, in opposition to the advice of almost all the lettered correspondents he had—more especially of Dr Moore, who, in his own novels, never ventured on more than a few casual specimens of Scottish colloquy—following therein the example of his illustrious predecessor Smollett; and not foreseeing that a triumph over English prejudice, which Smollett might have achieved, had he pleased to make the effort, was destined to be the prize of Burns's perseverance in obeying the dictates of native taste and judgment. Our poet received such suggestions, for the most part, in silence—not choosing to argue with others on a matter which concerned only his own feelings; but in writing to Mr Thomson, he had no occasion either to conceal or disguise his sentiments. "These English songs," says he, "gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue;"* and again, "so much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand at it in Scots verse. There I am always most at home."†—He, besides, would have considered it as a sort of

* Correspondence with Mr Thomson, p. 111.

† Ibid. p. 80.

national crime to do anything that must tend to divorce the music of his native land from her peculiar idiom. The "genius loci" was never worshipped more fervently than by Burns. "I am such an enthusiast," says he, "that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, *Lochaber* and the *Braes of Ballenden* excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scottish Muse." With such feelings, he was not likely to touch with an irreverent hand the old fabric of our national song, or to meditate a lyrical revolution for the pleasure of strangers. "There is," says he,* "a naïveté, a pastoral simplicity in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste) with the simple pathos or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever. One hint more let me give you.—Whatever Mr Pleyel does, let him not alter one *iota* of the original airs; I mean in the song department; but let our Scottish national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect." †

* Correspondence with Mr Thomson, p. 38.

† It may amuse the reader to hear, that in spite of all Burns's success in the use of his native dialect, even an eminently spirited bookseller to whom the manuscript of *Waverley* was submitted, hesitated for some time about publishing it, on account of the Scots dialogue interwoven in the novel.

Of the delight with which Burns laboured for Mr Thomson's Collection, his letters contain some lively descriptions. "You cannot imagine," says he, 7th April, 1793, "how much this business has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book and ballad-making are now as completely my hobbyhorse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race, (God grant I may take the right side of the winning-post,) and then, cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say or sing, 'Sae merry as we a' hae been,' and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of Coila shall be 'Good night, and joy be wi' you a'.'" *

"Until I am complete master of a tune in my own singing, such as it is, I can never," says Burns, "compose for it. My way is this. I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression,—then choose my theme,—compose one stanza. When that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out,—sit down now and then,—look out for objects in Nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom,—humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.—What cursed egotism!"†

* Correspondence with Mr Thomson, p. 57.

† Ibid. p. 119.

In this correspondence with Mr Thomson, and in Cromek's later publication, the reader will find a world of interesting details about the particular circumstances under which these immortal songs were severally written. They are all, or almost all, in fact, part and parcel of the poet's personal history. No man ever made his muse more completely the companion of his own individual life. A new flood of light has just been poured on the same subject, in Mr Allan Cunningham's "Collection of Scottish Songs;" unless, therefore, I were to transcribe volumes, and all popular volumes too, it is impossible to go into the details of this part of the poet's history. The reader must be contented with a few general *memoranda*; e. g.

"Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your book? No, no. Whenever I want to be more than ordinary *in song*—to be in some degree equal to your divine airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire*. I have a glorious recipe, the very one that for his own use was invented by the Divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus,—I put myself on a regimen of admiring a fine woman."*

"I can assure you I was never more in earnest.—Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but, somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where love is liberty, and nature law."

* Correspondence with Mr Thomson, p. 174.

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument, of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and—whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever raptures they might give me—yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase.” *——So says Burns in introducing to Mr Thomson’s notice one of his many songs in celebration of the *Lassie wi’ the lint-white locks*. “The beauty of Chloris,” says, nevertheless, Allan Cunningham, “has added many charms to Scottish song; but that which has increased the reputation of the poet, has lessened that of the man. Chloris was one of those who believe in the dispensing power of beauty, and thought that love should be under no demure restraint. Burns sometimes thought in the same way himself; and it is not wonderful, therefore, that the poet should celebrate the charms of a liberal beauty who was willing to reward his strains, and who gave him many opportunities of catching inspiration from her presence.” And in a note on the ballad which terminates with the delicious stanza;

“Let others love the city, and gaudy show at summer noon,
Gie me the lonely valley, the dewy eve, and rising moon,
Fair beaming and streaming her silver light the boughs
amang;

While falling, recalling, the amorous thrush concludes her
sang;

* Correspondence with Mr Thomson, p. 191.

There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove, by wimpling burn
 and leafy shaw,
 And hear my vows o' truth and love, and say thou lo'es
 me best of a'?"

The same commentator adds—"Such is the glowing picture which the poet gives of youth, and health, and voluptuous beauty; but let no lady envy the poetical elevation of poor Chloris; her situation in poetry is splendid—her situation in life merits our pity—perhaps our charity."

Of all Burns's love songs, the best, in his own opinion, was that which begins,

"Yestreen I had a pint o' wine,
 A place where body saw na'."

Mr Cunningham says, "if the poet thought so, I am sorry for it;" while the Reverend Hamilton Paul fully concurs in the author's own estimate of the performance. "I believe, however," says Cunningham, "*Anna wi' the gowden locks* was no imaginary person. Like the dame in the old song, *She brewed gude ale for gentlemen*; and while she served the bard with a pint of wine, allowed her customer leisure to admire her, 'as hostler wives should do.'"

There is in the same collection a love song, which unites the suffrages, and ever will do so, of all men. It has furnished Byron with a motto, and Scott has said that that motto is "worth a thousand romances."

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
 Had we never loved sae blindly,
 Never met,—or never parted,
 We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

The "Nancy" of this moving strain was, according

to Cunningham, another fair and somewhat frail dame of Dumfries-shire.*

I envy no one the task of inquiring minutely in how far these traditions, for such unquestionably they are, and faithfully conveyed by Allan Cunningham, rest on the foundation of truth. They refer at worst to occasional errors. "Many insinuations," says Mr Gray, "have been made against the poet's character as a husband, but without the slightest proof; and I might pass from the charge with that neglect which it merits; but I am happy to say that I have in exculpation the direct evidence of Mrs Burns herself, who, among many amiable and respectable qualities, ranks a veneration for the memory of her departed husband, whom she never names but in terms of the profoundest respect and the deepest regret, to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his kindnesses to herself, not as the momentary overflowings of the heart in a season of penitence for offences generously forgiven, but an habitual tenderness, which ended only with his life. I place this evidence, which I am proud to bring forward on her own authority, against a thousand anonymous calumnies."†

Among the effusions, not amatory, which Burns contributed to Mr Thomson's Collection, the famous song of Bannockburn holds the first place. We have already seen in how lively a manner Burns's feelings were kindled when he visited that glorious field. According to tradition, the tune played when Bruce led his troops to the charge, was "Hey tuttie tattie;" and it was humming this old air as he rode by himself through Glenken in

* Cunningham's *Scottish Songs*, vol. iv. p. 178.

† Letter in Gilbert Burns's edition, vol. I. app. v. p. 437.

Galloway, during a terrific storm of wind and rain, that the poet composed his immortal lyric in its first and noblest form.* This is one more instance of his delight in the sterner aspects of nature.

“Come, winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree—”

“There is hardly,” says he in one of his letters, “there is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him*, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew Bard, ‘walks on the wings of the wind.’” When Burns entered a druidical circle of stones on a dreary moor, he has already told us that his first movement was “to say his prayers.” His best poetry was to the last produced amidst scenes of solemn desolation.

* The last line of each stanza was subsequently lengthened and weakened, in order to suit the tune of Lewie Gordon, which Mr Thomson preferred to Hey tuttie tattie. I may add, however, what is well known to all lovers of Burns, and of Scottish Music, that almost immediately after having prevailed on the poet to make this alteration, Mr Thomson saw his error, and discarded both the change and the air which it was made to suit. The original air, and the original words, are now united for ever.

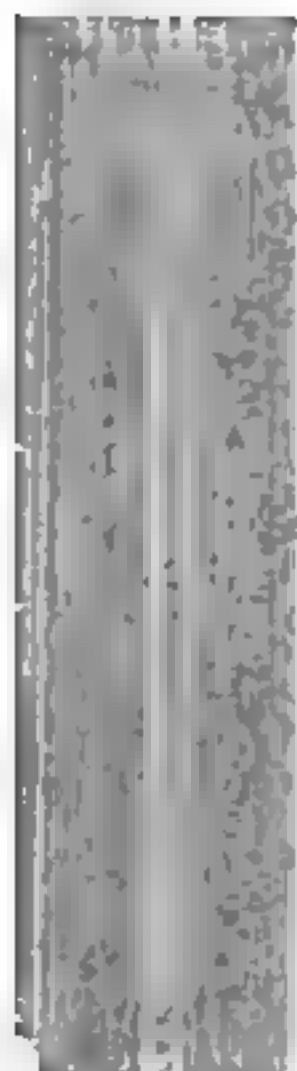
CHAPTER IX.

"I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear."

WE are drawing near the close of this great poet's mortal career ; and I would fain hope the details of the last chapter may have prepared the humane reader to contemplate it with sentiments of sorrow, pure comparatively, and undebased with any considerable intermixture of less genial feelings.

For some years before Burns was lost to his country, it is sufficiently plain that he had been, on political grounds, an object of suspicion and distrust to a large portion of the population that had most opportunity of observing him. The mean subalterns of party had, it is very easy to suppose, delighted in decrying him on pretexts, good, bad, and indifferent, equally—to their superiors ; and hence, who will not willingly believe it ? the temporary and local prevalence of those extravagantly injurious reports, the essence of which Dr Currie, no doubt, thought it his duty, as a biographer, to extract and circulate.

The untimely death of one who, had he lived to anything like the usual term of human existence, might have done so much to increase his fame as a poet, and to purify and dignify his character as a man, was, it is too probable, hastened by his own intemperances and imprudences : but *it seems to be extremely improbable, that, even if*



the first pages of this narrative were
press, I have heard from an old acquaint-
bard, who often shared his bed with I
giel, that even at that early period,
perance assuredly had had nothing to
matter, those ominous symptoms of
der in the digestive system, the "pal
suffocation" of which Gilbert speaks,
gularly his nocturnal visitants, that it
tom to have a great tub of cold water
side, into which he usually plunged
once in the course of the night, theret
instant, though but shortlived relief.
thus originally constructed, and thus
with most severe afflictions, external
what must not have been, under any
course of circumstances, the effect of
site sensibility of mind, but for whic
would never have heard anything eithe
or the sorrows, or the poetry of Burn

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stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions, than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as, arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet.” In these few short sentences, as it appears to me, Burns has traced his own character far better than any one else has done it since.—But with this lot what pleasures were not mingled?—“To you, madam,” he proceeds, “I need not recount the fairy pleasures the muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the counsels of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet, where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit’s solitary prospect of paradisiacal bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun, rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures, that we owe to the lovely Queen of the heart of man!”

“What is a poet?” asks one well qualified to answer his own question. “He is a man endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected, more than other men, by absent things, as if they were present; an ability of conjuring up in himself passions which are far indeed from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves.” * So says one of the rare beings who have been able to sustain and enjoy, through a long term of human years, the tear and wear of sensibilities thus quickened and refined beyond what falls to the lot of the ordinary brothers of their race—feeling more than others can dream of feeling, the joys and the sorrows that come to them as individuals, and filling up all those blanks which so largely interrupt the agitations of common bosoms—with the almost equally agitating sympathies of an imagination to which repose would be death. It is common to say of those who over-indulge themselves in material stimulants, that they live fast; what wonder that the

* Preface to the second edition of Wordsworth's Poems

career of the poet's thick-coming fancies should, in the immense majority of cases, be rapid too?

That Burns *lived fast*, in both senses of the phrase, we have abundant evidence from himself; and that the more earthly motion was somewhat accelerated as it approached the close, we may believe, without finding it at all necessary to mingle anger with our sorrow. "Even in his earliest poems," as Mr Wordsworth says, in a beautiful passage of his letter to Mr Gray, "through the veil of assumed habits and pretended qualities, enough of the real man appears to show that he was conscious of sufficient cause to dread his own passions, and to bewail his errors! We have rejected as false sometimes in the letter, and of necessity as false in the spirit, many of the testimonies that others have borne against him:—but, by his own hand—in words the import of which cannot be mistaken—it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views. It is probable that he would have proved a still greater poet if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered; but he would have been a poet of a different class: and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and many accessory influences, which contribute greatly to their effect, would have been wanting. For instance, the momentous truth of the passage—

"One point must still be greatly dark," &c. *

* "Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentlier sister woman—
Tho' they may gang a kennin' wrang;
To step aside is human:

could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice; unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower that might have risen from seed sown from above, was in fact a scion from the root of personal suffering. Whom did the poet intend should be thought of as occupying that grave over which, after modestly setting forth the moral discernment and warm affections of its 'poor inhabitant,' it is supposed to be inscribed that

' ——— Thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name ?'

Who but himself,—himself anticipating the too probable termination of his own course? Here is a sincere and solemn avowal—a public declaration from his own will—a confession at once devout, poetical, and human—a history in the shape of a prophecy! What more was required of the biographer than to put his seal to the writing, testifying that the foreboding had been realized, and that the record was authentic?"

In how far the "thoughtless follies" of the poet did actually hasten his end, it is needless to conjecture. They had their share, unquestionably, along with other influences which it would be inhuman to characterise as mere follies—such, for example, as that general depression of spirits, which haunted him from his youth, and, in all likelihood, sat more heavily on such a being as Burns than a

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it."

man of plain common sense might guess,—or even a casual expression of discouraging tendency from the persons on whose good-will all hopes of substantial advancement in the scale of worldly promotion depended,—or that *partial* exclusion from the species of society our poet had been accustomed to adorn and delight, which, from however inadequate causes, certainly did occur during some of the latter years of his life—All such sorrows as these must have acted with twofold harmfulness upon Burns; harassing, in the first place, one of the most sensitive minds that ever filled a human bosom, and, alas! by consequence, tempting to additional excesses;—impelling one who, under other circumstances, might have sought and found far other consolation, to seek too often for it

“ In fleeting mirth, that o’er the bottle lives,
In the false joy its inspiration gives,
And in associates pleased to find a friend
With powers to lead them, gladden, and defend,
In all those scenes where transient ease is found
For minds whom sins oppress, and sorrows wound.”*

The same philosophical poet tells us, that

“ —Wine is like anger, for it makes us strong;
Blind and impatient, and it leads us wrong;
The strength is quickly lost, we feel the error long.”

But a short period was destined for the sorrows and the errors equally of Burns.

How he struggled against the tide of his misery, let the following letter speak—it was written February 25, 1794, and addressed to Mr Alexander Cunningham, an eccentric being, but generous and

* Crabbe’s *Edward Shore*, a tale, in which the poet has obviously had Burns in his view.

faithful in his friendship to Burns, and, when Burns was no more, to his family.

“Canst thou minister,” says the poet, “to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tost on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, tremblingly alive as the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why would'st thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?”

“For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these ***** times—losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

“Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.—Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. THE OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may

deny, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to those awful obscure realities—an all powerful and equally beneficent God—and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field;—the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

“ I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know anything of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through

nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighted degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson,

‘ These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
Is full of thee;’

and so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn.—These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God.”

They who have been told that Burns was ever a degraded being—who have permitted themselves to believe that his only consolations were those of “the opiate guilt applies to grief,” will do well to pause over this noble letter and judge for themselves. The enemy under which he was destined to sink, had already beaten in the outworks of his constitution when these lines were penned.

The reader has already had occasion to observe, that Burns had in those closing years of his life to struggle almost continually with pecuniary difficulties, than which nothing could have been more likely to pour bitterness intolerable into the cup of his existence. His lively imagination exaggerated to itself every real evil; and this among, and perhaps above, all the rest; at least, in many of his letters we find him alluding to the probability of his being arrested for debts, which we now know to have been of very trivial amount at the worst.

which we also know he himself lived to discharge to the utmost farthing, and in regard to which it is impossible to doubt that his personal friends in Dumfries would have at all times been ready to prevent the law taking its ultimate course. This last consideration, however, was one which would have given slender relief to Burns. How he shrunk with horror and loathing from the sense of pecuniary obligation, no matter to whom, we have had abundant indications already.*

The question naturally arises: Burns was all this while pouring out his beautiful songs for the Museum of Johnson and the greater work of Thomson; how did he happen to derive no pecuniary advantages from this continual exertion of his genius in a form of composition so eminently calculated for popularity? Nor, indeed, is it an easy matter to answer this very obvious question. The poet himself, in a letter to Mr Carfrae, dated 1789, speaks thus: "The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr Mylne's relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest which fate

* The following extract from one of his letters to Mr Macmurdo, dated December, 1793, will speak for itself:—

"Sir, it is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man.—Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas; and now, I don't owe a shilling to man, or woman either. But for these damned dirty, dog's-eared little pages, (Scotch bank-notes,) I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under, the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face."

has denied himself to reap." And yet, so far from looking to Mr Johnson for any pecuniary remuneration for the very laborious part he took in his work, it appears from a passage in Cromek's *Reliques*, that the poet asked a single copy of the Museum to give to a fair friend, by way of a great favour to himself—and that that copy and his own were really all he ever received at the hands of the publisher. Of the secret history of Johnson and his book I know nothing ; but the Correspondence of Burns with Mr Thomson contains curious enough details concerning his connexion with that gentleman's more important undertaking. At the outset, September, 1792, we find Mr Thomson saying, " We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to save neither pains nor expense on the publication." To which Burns replies immediately, " As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price ; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c., would be downright prostitution of soul. A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, *Gude speed the wark*." The next time we meet with any hint as to money matters in the Correspondence is in a letter of Mr Thomson, 1st July, 1793, where he says, " I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me ; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done : as I shall be benefitted by the publication, you must

suffer me to enclose a small mark of my gratitude, and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by Heaven, if you do, our correspondence is at an end." To which letter (it enclosed L.5) Burns thus replies:—"I assure you, my dear sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that honour which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns's integrity—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you. Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve."—In November, 1794, we find Mr Thomson writing to Burns, "Do not, I beseech you, return any books."—In May, 1795, "You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me;" (this was a drawing of the *Cottar's Saturday Night*, by Allan); "I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again by speaking of obligation." On February, 1796, we have Burns acknowledging a "handsome elegant present to Mrs B——," which was a worsted shawl. Lastly, on the 12th July of the same year, (*that is, little more than a week before Burns died,*) he writes to Mr Thomson in these terms:—"Af-

ter all my boasted independence, cursed necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have put me half distracted.—I do not ask this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen." To which Mr Thomson replies—"Ever since I received your melancholy letter by Mrs Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer; but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but one day for your sake!—Pray, my good sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? Do not shun this method of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the *Iliad* by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not think me intrusive with my advice."

Such are the details of this matter, as recorded in the correspondence of the two individuals concerned. Some time after Burns's death, Mr Thomson was attacked on account of his behaviour to the poet, in an anonymous novel, which I have never seen, called *Nubilia*; in Professor Walker's

Memoirs, which appeared in 1816, Mr Thomson took the opportunity of defending himself:* and

* “ I have been attacked with much bitterness, and accused of not endeavouring to remunerate Burns for the songs which he wrote for my collection ; although there is the clearest evidence of the contrary, both in the printed correspondence between the poet and me, and in the public testimony of Dr Currie. My assailant, too, without knowing anything of the matter, states, that I had enriched myself by the labours of Burns ; and of course, that my want of generosity was inexcusable.

“ Now, the fact is, that notwithstanding the united labours of all the men of genius who have enriched my collection, I am not even yet compensated for the precious time consumed by me in poring over musty volumes, and in corresponding with every amateur and poet by whose means I expected to make any valuable additions to our national music and song ;—for the exertion and money it cost me to obtain accompaniments from the greatest masters of harmony in Vienna ;—and for the sums paid to engravers, printers, and others. On this subject, the testimony of Mr Preston in London, a man of unquestionable and well-known character, who has printed the music for every copy of my work, may be more satisfactory than anything I can say : In August 1809, he wrote me as follows : ‘ I am concerned at the very unwarrantable attack which has been made upon you by the author of *Nubilia* : nothing could be more unjust than to say you had enriched yourself by Burns’s labours ; for the whole concern, though it includes the labours of Haydn, has scarcely afforded a compensation for the various expenses, and for the time employed on the work. When a work obtains any celebrity, publishers are generally supposed to derive a profit ten times beyond the reality ; the sale is greatly magnified, and the expenses are not in the least taken into consideration. It is truly vexatious to be so grossly and scandalously abused for conduct, the very reverse of which has been manifest through the whole transaction.’

“ Were I the sordid man that the anonymous author calls me, I had a most inviting opportunity to profit much more than I did by the lyrics of our great bard. He had written above fifty songs expressly for my work ; they were in my possession unpublished at his death ; I had the right

Professor Walker, who enjoyed the personal friendship of Burns, and who also appears to have had the honour of Mr Thomson's intimate acquaintance, has delivered an opinion on the whole merits of the case, which must necessarily be far more satisfactory to the reader than anything which I could presume to offer in its room. "Burns," says this writer, "had all the unmanageable pride of Samuel Johnson; and, if the latter threw away, with indignation, the new shoes which had been placed at his chamber-door, secretly and collectively by his companions,—the former would have been still more ready to resent any pecuniary donation with which a single individual, after his peremptory prohibition, should avowedly have dared to insult him.

and the power of retaining them till I should be ready to publish them; but when I was informed that an edition of the poet's works was projected for the benefit of his family, I put them in immediate possession of the whole of his songs, as well as letters, and thus enabled Dr Currie to complete the four volumes which were sold for the family's behoof to Messrs Cadell and Davies. And I have the satisfaction of knowing, that the most zealous friends of the family, Mr Cunninghame, Mr Syme, and Dr Currie, and the poet's own brother, considered my sacrifice of the prior right of publishing the songs, as no ungrateful return for the disinterested and liberal conduct of the poet. Accordingly, Mr Gilbert Burns, in a letter to me, which alone might suffice for an answer to all the novelist's abuse, thus expresses himself: 'If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed me in the opinion, that musical taste and talents have a close connexion with the harmony of the moral feelings.' Nothing is farther from my thoughts than to claim any merit for what I did. I never would have said a word on the subject, but for the harsh and groundless accusation which has been brought forward, either by ignorance or animosity, and which I have long suffered to remain unnoticed, from my great dislike to any public appearance."

He would instantly have construed such conduct into a virtual assertion that his prohibition was insincere, and his independence affected; and the more artfully the transaction had been disguised, the more rage it would have excited, as implying the same assertion, with the additional charge, that if secretly made it would not be denied. The statement of Mr Thomson supersedes the necessity of any additional remarks. When the public is satisfied; when the relations of Burns are grateful; and, above all, when the delicate mind of Mr Thomson is at peace with itself in contemplating his conduct, there can be no necessity for a nameless novelist to contradict them." *

So far, Mr Walker :—why Burns, who was of opinion, when he wrote his letter to Mr Carfrae, that “no profits are more honourable than those of the labours of a man of genius,” and whose own notions of independence had sustained no shock in the receipt of hundreds of pounds from Creech, should have spurned the suggestion of pecuniary recompense from Mr Thomson, it is no easy matter to explain: nor do I profess to understand why Mr Thomson took so little pains to argue the matter *in limine* with the poet, and convince him, that the time which he himself considered as fairly entitled to be paid for by a common bookseller, ought of right to be valued and acknowledged on similar terms by the editor and proprietor of a book containing both songs and music.

They order these things differently now: a living lyric poet whom none will place in a higher rank than Burns, has long, it is understood, been in the habit of receiving about as much money an-

* *Life* prefixed to Morrison's Burns, pp. cviii. cxii.

nually for an annual handful of songs, as was ever paid to our bard for the whole body of his writings.

Of the increasing irritability of our poet's temperament, amidst those troubles, external and internal, that preceded his last illness, his letters furnish proofs, to dwell on which could only inflict unnecessary pain. Let one example suffice.—“ Sunday closes a period of our curst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen ! Here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d—— melange of fretfulness and melancholy ; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor ; my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tenement, like a wild finch, caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold —‘ And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper !’ Pray that wisdom and bliss be more frequent visitors of R. B.”

Towards the close of 1795 Burns was, as has been previously mentioned, employed as an acting Supervisor of Excise. This was apparently a step to a permanent situation of that higher and more lucrative class ; and from thence, there was every reason to believe, the kind patronage of Mr Graham might elevate him yet farther. These hopes, however, were mingled and darkened with sorrow. For four months of that year his youngest child lingered through an illness of which every week promised to be the last ; and she was finally cut off when the poet, who had watched her with anxious tenderness, was from home on professional business. This was a severe blow, and his own nerves, though

as yet he had not taken any serious alarm about his ailments, were ill fitted to withstand it.

“There had need,” he writes to Mrs Dunlop, 15th December, “there had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks ; me and my exertions all their stay ; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang ! If I am nipt off at the command of fate, even in all the vigour of manhood as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God ! what would become of my little flock ! ’Tis here that I envy your people of fortune.—A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough ; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends ; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject.”

To the same lady, on the 29th of the month, he, after mentioning his supervisorship, and saying that at last his political sins seemed to be forgiven him—goes on in this ominous tone—“What a transient business is life ! Very lately I was a boy ; but t’other day a young man ; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast over my frame.” We may trace the melancholy sequel in these extracts.

“31st *January* 1796.—I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe

rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick-bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

“ When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear the untried night,
That shuts, for ever shuts ! life’s doubtful day.”

But a few days after this, Burns was so exceedingly imprudent as to join a festive circle at a tavern dinner, where he remained till about three in the morning. The weather was severe, and he, being much intoxicated, took no precaution in thus exposing his debilitated frame to its influence. It has been said, that he fell asleep upon the snow on his way home. It is certain, that next morning he was sensible of an icy numbness through all his joints—that his rheumatism returned with tenfold force upon him—and that from that unhappy hour, his mind brooded ominously on the fatal issue. The course of medicine to which he submitted was violent; confinement, accustomed as he had been to much bodily exercise, preyed miserably on all his powers; he drooped visibly, and all the hopes of his friends that health would return with summer, were destined to disappointment.

“ *4th June 1796.**—I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of showing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak and Balaam,—‘ Come curse me Jacob; and come defy me Israel.’ ”

* The birth-day of George III.

“ 7th July.—I fear the voice of the Bard will soon be heard among you no more.—For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me—pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair.—My spirits fled! fled! But I can no more on the subject.”

This last letter was addressed to Mr Cunningham of Edinburgh, from the small village of Brow on the Solway Frith, about ten miles from Dumfries, to which the poet removed about the end of June; “the medical folks,” as he says, “having told him that his last and only chance was bathing, country quarters, and riding.” In separating himself by their advice from his family for these purposes, he carried with him a heavy burden of care. “The deuce of the matter,” he writes, “is this; when an exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country quarters on L.35?” He implored his friends in Edinburgh, to make interest with the Board to grant him his full salary; “if they do not, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poete*—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger.” The application was, I believe, successful; but Burns lived not to profit by the indulgence, or the justice, of his superiors.

Mrs Riddell of Glenriddel, a beautiful and very accomplished woman, to whom many of Burns's most interesting letters, in the latter years of his life, were addressed, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Brow when Burns reached his bathin-

quarters, and exerted herself to make him as comfortable as circumstances permitted. Having sent her carriage for his conveyance, the poet visited her on the 5th July; and she has, in a letter published by Dr Currie, thus described his appearance and conversation on that occasion :—

“ I was struck with his appearance on entering the room. The stamp of death was impressed on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, ‘ Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?’ I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest, and that I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. (I was then in a poor state of health.) He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his accustomed sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present situation, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling—as an event likely to happen very soon, and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in so interesting a situation—in hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. He mentioned, with seeming pride and satisfaction, the promising genius of his eldest son, and the flattering marks of approbation he had received from his teachers, and dwelt particularly on his hopes of that boy’s future conduct and merit. His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy upon him, and the more perhaps from the reflection that he had not done

them all the justice he was so well qualified to do. Passing from this subject, he showed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation : that letters and verses written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malevolence, when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, or prevent the censures of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious sarcasms of envy, from pouring forth all their venom to blast his fame. He lamented that he had written many epigrams on persons against whom he entertained no enmity, and whose characters he should be sorry to wound ; and many indifferent poetical pieces, which he feared would now, with all their imperfections on their head, be thrust upon the world. On this account he deeply regretted having deferred to put his papers into a state of arrangement, as he was now quite incapable of the exertion.—The conversation was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I have seldom seen his mind greater or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and dejection I could not disguise, damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed not unwilling to indulge.—We parted about sun-set on the evening of that day (the 5th of July, 1796) ; the next day I saw him again, and we parted to meet no more !”

I do not know the exact date of the following :—

To Mrs Burns.—“Brow, Thursday.—My dearest Love, I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow: porridge and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday. Your affectionate husband, R. B.”

There is a very affecting letter to Gilbert, dated the 7th, in which the poet says, “I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better.—God keep my wife and children.” On the 12th, he wrote the letter to Mr George Thomson, above quoted, requesting L.5; and, on the same day, he penned also the following—the last letter that he ever wrote—to his friend Mrs Dunlop.

“Madam, I have written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns*. Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!!!”

I give the following anecdote in the words of Mr

M'Diarmid: *—"Rousseau, we all know, when dying, wished to be carried into the open air, that he might obtain a parting look of the glorious orb of day. A night or two before Burns left Brow, he drank tea with Mrs Craig, widow of the minister of Ruthwell. His altered appearance excited much silent sympathy; and the evening being beautiful, and the sun shining brightly through the casement, Miss Craig (now Mrs Henry Duncan), was afraid the light might be too much for him, and rose with the view of letting down the window blinds. Burns immediately guessed what she meant; and, regarding the young lady with a look of great benig-nity, said, 'Thank you, my dear, for your kind attention; but, oh, let him shine; he will not shine long for me.'"

On the 18th, despairing of any benefit from the sea, our poet came back to Dumfries. Mr Allan Cunningham, who saw him arrive "visibly changed in his looks, being with difficulty able to stand upright, and reach his own door," has given a striking picture, in one of his essays, of the state of popular feeling in the town during the short space which intervened between his return and his death.—"Dumfries was like a besieged place. It was known he was dying, and the anxiety, not of the rich and the learned only, but of the mechanics and peasants, exceeded all belief. Wherever two or three people stood together, their talk was of Burns, and of him alone. They spoke of his history—of his person—of his works—of his family—of his fame—and of his untimely and approach-

* I take the opportunity of once more acknowledging my great obligations to this gentleman, who is, I understand, connected by his marriage with the family of the poet.

ing fate, with a warmth and an enthusiasm which will ever endear Dumfries to my remembrance. All that he said or was saying—the opinions of the physicians, (and Maxwell was a kind and a skilful one,) were eagerly caught up and reported from street to street, and from house to house.”

“ His good humour,” Cunningham adds, “ was unruffled, and his wit never forsook him. He looked to one of his fellow volunteers with a smile, as he stood by the bed-side with his eyes wet, and said, ‘ John, don’t let the awkward squad fire over me.’ He repressed with a smile the hopes of his friends, and told them he had lived long enough. As his life drew near a close, the eager yet decorous solicitude of his fellow townsmen increased. It is the practice of the young men of Dumfries to meet in the streets during the hours of remission from labour, and by these means I had an opportunity of witnessing the general solicitude of all ranks and of all ages. His differences with them on some important points were forgotten and forgiven ; they thought only of his genius—of the delight his compositions had diffused—and they talked of him with the same awe as of some departing spirit, whose voice was to gladden them no more.” *

“ A tremour now pervaded his frame,” says Dr Currie, on the authority of the physician who attended him ; “ his tongue was parched ; and his mind sunk into delirium, when not roused by conversation. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished.” On the fourth, July 21st, 1796, Robert Burns died.

“ I went to see him laid out for the grave,” says Mr Allan Cunningham ; “ several elder peo-

* In the London Magazine, 1824. Article, “ Robert Burns and Lord Byron.”

ple were with me. He lay in a plain unadorned coffin, with a linen sheet drawn over his face ; and on the bed, and around the body, herbs and flowers were thickly strewn, according to the usage of the country. He was wasted somewhat by long illness ; but death had not increased the swarthy hue of his face, which was uncommonly dark and deeply marked—his broad and open brow was pale and serene, and around it his sable hair lay in masses, slightly touched with grey. The room where he lay was plain and neat, and the simplicity of the poet's humble dwelling pressed the presence of death more closely on the heart than if his bier had been embellished by vanity, and covered with the blazonry of high ancestry and rank. We stood and gazed on him in silence for the space of several minutes—we went, and others succeeded us—not a whisper was heard. This was several days after his death."

On the 25th of July, the remains of the poet were removed to the Trades-hall, where they lay in state until next morning. The volunteers of Dumfries were determined to inter their illustrious comrade (as indeed he had anticipated) with military honours. The chief persons of the town and neighbourhood resolved to make part of the procession ; and not a few travelled from great distances to witness the solemnity. The streets were lined by the Fencible Infantry of Angus-shire, and the Cavalry of the Cinque Ports, then quartered at Dumfries, whose commander, Lord Hawkesbury, (now Earl of Liverpool,) although he had always declined a personal introduction to the poet, * officiated as one of the chief mourners. " The mul-

* So Mr Syme has informed Mr M'Diarmid.

titude who accompanied Burns to the grave, went step by step," says Cunningham, "with the chief mourners. They might amount to ten or twelve thousand. Not a word was heard It was an impressive and mournful sight to see men of all ranks and persuasions and opinions mingling as brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys and domestic endearments, with a truth and a tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled. I could, indeed, have wished the military part of the procession away. The scarlet and gold—the banners displayed—the measured step, and the military array—with the sounds of martial instruments of music, had no share in increasing the solemnity of the burial scene; and had no connexion with the poet. I looked on it then, and I consider it now, as an idle ostentation, a piece of superfluous state which might have been spared, more especially as his neglected and traduced and insulted spirit had experienced no kindness in the body from those lofty people who are now proud of being numbered as his coevals and countrymen. I found myself at the brink of the poet's grave, into which he was about to descend for ever. There was a pause among the mourners, as if loath to part with his remains; and when he was at last lowered, and the first shovelful of earth sounded on his coffin lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The volunteers justified the fears of their comrade, by three ragged and straggling volleys. The earth was heaped up, the green sod laid over him, and the multitude stood gazing on the grave for some minutes' space, and then melted silently away. The day was a fine one, the sun

was almost without a cloud, and not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this, not from any concurrence in the common superstition, that 'happy is the corpse which the rain rains on,' but to confute the pious fraud of a religious Magazine, which made heaven express its wrath, at the interment of a profane poet, in thunder, in lightning, and in rain."

During the funeral solemnity, Mrs Burns was seized with the pains of labour, and gave birth to a posthumous son, who quickly followed his father to the grave. Mr Cunningham describes the appearance of the family, when they at last emerged from their home of sorrow:—"A weeping widow and four helpless sons; they came into the streets in their mournings, and public sympathy was awakened afresh. I shall never forget the looks of his boys, and the compassion which they excited. The poet's life had not been without errors, and such errors, too, as a wife is slow in forgiving; but he was honoured then, and is honoured now, by the unalienable affection of his wife, and the world repays her prudence and her love by its regard and esteem."

There was much talk at the time of a subscription for a monument; but Mrs Burns beginning, ere long, to suspect that the business was to end in talk, covered the grave at her own expense with a plain tombstone, inscribed simply with the name and age of the poet. In 1813, however, a public meeting was held at Dumfries, General Dunlop, son to Burns's friend and patroness, being in the chair; a subscription was opened, and contributions flowing in rapidly from all quarters, a costly mausoleum was at length erected on the most elevated site which the churchyard presented. Thither

he remains of the poet were solemnly transferred * on the 5th June 1815 ; and the spot continues to be visited every year by many hundreds of travellers. The structure, which is perhaps more gaudy than might have been wished, bears this inscription :

IN AETERNUM HONOREM
ROBERTI BURNS

POETARUM CALEDONIAE SUI AEVI LONGE PRINCIPIS
EIJUS CARMINA EXIMIA PATRIO SERMONE SCRIPTA
ANIMI MAGIS ARDENTIS VIQUE INGENII
QUAM ARTE VEL CULTU CONSPICUA
FACETIIS JUCUNDITATE LEPORE AFFLUENTIA
-OMNIBUS LITTERARUM CULTORIBUS SATIS NOTA
CIVES SUI NECNON PLERIQUE OMNES
MUSARUM AMANTISSIMI MEMORIAMQUE VIRI
ARTE POETICA TAM PRAECLARI FOVENTES
HOC MAUSOLEUM
SUPER RELIQUIAS POETAE MORTALES
EXTRUENDUM CURAVERE
PRIMUM HUIUS AEDIFICII LAPIDEM
GULIELMUS MILLER ARMIGER
REIPUBLICAE ARCHITECTONICAE APUD SCOTOS
IN REGIONE AUSTRALI CURIO MAXIMUS PROVINCIAL
GEORGIO TERTIO REGNANTE
GEORGIO WALLIARUM PRINCIPE
SUMMAM IMPERII PRO PATRE TENENTE
JOSEPHO GASS ARMIGERO DUMFRISIAE PRAEFEC
THOMA F. HUNT LONDINENSI ARCHITECTO
POSUIT
NONIS JUNIIS ANNO LUCIS VMDCCXV
SALUTIS HUMANAE MDCCXV.*

Immediately after the poet's death, a subscription was opened for the benefit of his family

* The original tombstone of Burns was sunk under pavement of the mausoleum ; and the grave which received his remains is now occupied, according to his dying request, by a daughter of Mrs Dunlop.

Miller of Dalswinton, Dr Maxwell, Mr Syme, Mr Cunningham, and Mr M'Murdo, becoming trustees for the application of the money. Many names from other parts of Scotland appeared in the lists, and not a few from England, especially London and Liverpool. Seven hundred pounds were in this way collected; an additional sum was forwarded from India; and the profits of Dr Currie's Life and Edition of Burns were also considerable. The result has been, that the sons of the poet received an excellent education, and that Mrs Burns has continued to reside, enjoying a decent independence, in the house where the poet died, situated in what is now, by the authority of the Dumfries Magistracy, called Burns' Street.

"Of the (four surviving) sons of the poet," says their uncle Gilbert in 1820, "Robert, the eldest, is placed as a clerk in the Stamp Office, London," (Mr Burns still remains in that establishment,) Francis Wallace, the second, died in 1803; William Nicoll, the third, went to Madras in 1811; and James Glencairn, the youngest, to Bengal in 1812, both as cadets in the Honourable Company's service." These young gentlemen have all, it is believed, conducted themselves through life in a manner highly honourable to themselves, and to the name which they bear. One of them, (James,) as soon as his circumstances permitted, settled a liberal annuity on his estimable mother, which she still survives to enjoy

Gilbert Burns, the admirable brother of the poet, survived till the 27th of April 1827. He removed from Mossgiel, shortly after the death of the poet, to a farm in Dumfries-shire, carrying with him his aged mother, who died under his

roof. At a later period he became factor to the noble family of Blantyre, on their estates in East Lothian. The pecuniary succours which the poet afforded Gilbert Burns, and still more the interest excited in his behalf by the account of his personal character contained in Currie's Memoir, proved of high advantage to him. He trained up a large family, six sons and five daughters, and bestowed on all his boys what is called a classical education. The untimely death of one of these, a young man of very promising talents, when on the eve of being admitted to holy orders, is supposed to have hastened the departure of the venerable parent. It should not be omitted, that, on the publication of his edition of his brother's works, in 1819, Gilbert repaid, with interest, the sum which the poet advanced to him in 1788. Through life, and in death, he maintained and justified the promise of his virtuous youth, and seems in all respects to have resembled his father, of whom Murdoch, long after he was no more, wrote in language honourable to his own heart: "O for a world of men of such dispositions! I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honour and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude as it is to extol what are called heroic actions: then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of those we see in Westminster Abbey!" *

It is pleasing to trace, in all these details, the happy influence which our poet's genius has ex-

* These particulars are taken from an article which appeared, soon after Mr Burns's death, in the *Dumfries Courier*.

erted over the destinies of his connexions. “In the fortunes of his family,” says Mr M'Diarmid,* “there are few who do not feel the liveliest interest; and were a register kept of the names, and numbers, and characters, of those who from time to time visit the humble but decent abode in which Burns breathed his last, amid the deepest despondency for the fate of those who were dearer to him than life, and in which his widow is spending tranquilly the evening of her days in the enjoyment of a competency, not derived from the bounty of the public, but from the honourable exertions of her own offspring—the detail, though dry, would be pleasing to many, and would weaken, though it could not altogether efface, one of the greatest stains on the character of our country. Even as it is, his name has proved a source of patronage to those he left behind him, such as the high and the noble cannot always command. Wherever his sons wander, at home or abroad, they are regarded as the scions of a noble stock, and receive the cordial greetings of hundreds who never saw their faces before, but who account it a happiness to grasp in friendly pressure the proffered hand in which circulates the blood of Burns.” †

* Article in the Dumfries Magazine, August, 1825.

† Mr M'Diarmid, in the article above quoted, gives a touching account of the illness and death of one of the daughters of Mr James Glencairn Burns, on her voyage homewards from India. At the funeral of this poor child there was witnessed, says he, a most affecting scene. “Officers, passengers, and men, were drawn up in regular order on deck; some wore crape round the right arm, others were dressed in the deepest mourning; every head was uncovered; and as the lashing of the waves on the sides of the coffin proclaimed that the melancholy ceremony had closed, every

Sic vos non vobis.—The great poet himself, whose name is enough to ennoble his children's children, was, to the eternal disgrace of his country, suffered to live and die in penury, and, as far as such a creature could be degraded by any external circumstances, in degradation. Who can open the page of Burns, and remember without a blush, that the author of such verses, the human being whose breast glowed with such feelings, was doomed to earn mere bread for his children by casting up the stock of publicans' cellars, and riding over moors and mosses in quest of smuggling stills? The subscription for his Poems was, for the time, large and liberal, and perhaps absolves the gentry of Scotland as individuals; but that some strong movement of indignation did not spread over the whole kingdom, when it was known that Robert Burns, after being caressed and flattered by the noblest and most learned of his countrymen, was about to be established as a common gauger among the wilds of Nithsdale—and that, after he was so established, no interference from a higher quarter arrested that unworthy career:—these are circumstances which must continue to bear heavily on the memory of that generation of Scotsmen, and especially of those who then administered the public patronage of Scotland.

In defence, or at least in palliation, of this national crime, two false arguments, the one resting on facts grossly exaggerated, the other having no foundation whatever either on knowledge or on countenance seemed saddened with grief—every eye moistened with tears. Not a few of the sailors wept outright, natives of Scotland, who, even when far away, had revived their recollections of home and youth, by listening to, or repeating the poetry of Burns."

wisdom, have been rashly set up, and arrogantly as well as ignorantly maintained. To the one, namely, that public patronage would have been wrongfully bestowed on the Poet, because the Exciseman was a political partizan, it is hoped the details embodied in this narrative have supplied a sufficient answer: had the matter been as bad as the boldest critics have ever ventured to insinuate, Sir Walter Scott's answer would still have remained—"this partizan was BURNS." The other argument is a still more heartless, as well as absurd one; to wit, that from the moral character and habits of the man, no patronage, however liberal, could have influenced and controlled his conduct, so as to work lasting and effective improvement, and lengthen his life by raising it more nearly to the elevation of his genius. This is indeed a candid and a generous method of judging! Are imprudence and intemperance, then, found to increase usually in proportion as the worldly circumstances of men are easy? Is not the very opposite of this doctrine acknowledged by almost all that have ever tried the reverses of Fortune's wheel themselves—by all that have contemplated, from an elevation not too high for sympathy, the usual course of manners, when their fellow creatures either encounter or live in constant apprehension of

"The thousand ills that rise where money fails,
Debts, threats, and duns, bills, bailiffs, writs, and jails?"

To such mean miseries the latter years of Burns's life were exposed, not less than his early youth, and after what natural buoyancy of animal spirits he ever possessed, had sunk under the influence of time, which, surely bringing experience, fails seldom to bring care also and sorrow, to spi-

rite more mercurial than his ; and in what bitterness of heart he submitted to his fate, let his own burning words once more tell us. " Take," says he, writing to one who never ceased to be his friend—" take these two guineas, and place them over against that ***** account of yours, which has gagged my mouth these five or six months ! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O, the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five ! Poverty ! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell ! Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul, under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee ; the children of folly and vice, though, in common with thee, the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. The man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education, is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies, as usual, bring him to want ; and when his necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. His early follies and extravagance, are spirit and fire ; his consequent wants, are the embarrassments of an honest fellow ; and when, to

remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder ; lives wicked and respected, and dies a ***** and a lord.—Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman ! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot wheels of the coroneted RIP, hurrying on to the guilty assignation ; she, who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.—Well ! divines may say of it what they please, but execration is to the mind, what phlebotomy is to the body ; the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations.” *

In such evacuations of indignant spleen the proud heart of many an unfortunate genius, besides this, has found or sought relief : and to other more dangerous indulgences, the affliction of such sensitive spirits had often, ere his time, condescended. The list is a long and a painful one ; and it includes some names that can claim but a scanty share in the apology of Burns. Addison, himself, the elegant, the philosophical, the religious Addison, must be numbered with these offenders :—Jonson, Cotton, Prior, Parnell, Otway, Savage, all sinned in the same sort, and the transgressions of them all have been leniently dealt with, in comparison with those of one whose genius was probably greater than any of theirs ; his appetites more fervid, his temptations more abundant, his repentance more

* Letter to Mr Peter Hill, bookseller, Edinburgh. *General Correspondence*, p. 328.

severe. The beautiful genius of Collins sunk under similar contaminations; and those who have from dulness of head, or sourness of heart, joined in the too general clamour against Burns, may learn a lesson of candour, of mercy, and of justice, from the language in which one of the best of men, and loftiest of moralists, has commented on frailties that hurried a kindred spirit to a like untimely grave.

“In a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation,” says Johnson, “it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform.— That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm: but it may be said that he at least preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure or casual temptation. Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness.”

Burns was an honest man: after all his struggles, he owed no man a shilling when he died. His heart was always warm and his hand open. “His charities,” says Mr Gray, “were great beyond his means;” and I have to thank Mr Allan Cunningham for the following anecdote, for which I am sure every reader will thank him too. Mr Maxwell of Teraughty, an old, austere, sarcastic gentleman, who cared nothing about poetry, used to say when the Excise-books of the district were produced at the meetings of the justices,—“Bring me Burns’s journal: it always does me good to see it, for it shows

that an honest officer may carry a kind heart about with him."

Of his religious principles, we are bound to judge by what he has told us himself in his more serious moments. He sometimes doubted with the sorrow, what in the main, and above all, in the end, he believed with the fervour of a poet. "It occasionally haunts me," says he in one of his letters,—“the dark suspicion, that immortality may be only too good news to be true;” and here, as on many points besides, how much did his method of thinking, (I fear I must add of acting,) resemble that of a noble poet more recently lost to us. “I am no bigot to infidelity,” said Lord Byron, “and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man, I should be charged with denying the existence of a God. It was the comparative insignificance of ourselves and our world, when placed in comparison with the mighty whole, of which it is an atom, that first led me to imagine that our pretensions to immortality might be overrated.” I dare not pretend to quote the sequel from memory, but the effect was, that Byron, like Burns, complained of “the early discipline of Scotch Calvinism,” and the natural gloom of a melancholy heart, as having between them engendered “a hypochondriacal *disease*,” which occasionally visited and depressed him through life. In the opposite scale, we are, in justice to Burns, to place many pages which breathe the ardour, nay the exultation of faith, and the humble sincerity of Christian hope; and as the poet himself has warned us, it well befits us “at the balance to be mute.” Let us avoid, in the name of Religion herself, the fatal error of those who would rashly swell the *catalogue of the enemies of religion*. “A sally of

levity," says once more Dr Johnson, "an indecent jest, an unreasonable objection, are sufficient, in the opinion of some men, to efface a name from the lists of Christianity, to exclude a soul from everlasting life. Such men are so watchful to censure, that they have seldom much care to look for favourable interpretations of ambiguities, or to know how soon any step of inadvertency has been expiated by sorrow and retraction, but let fly their fulminations without mercy or prudence against slight offences or casual temerities, against crimes never committed, or immediately repented. The zealot should recollect, that he is labouring, by this frequency of excommunication, against his own cause, and voluntarily adding strength to the enemies of truth. It must always be the condition of a great part of mankind, to reject and embrace teachers upon the authority of those whom they think wiser than themselves, and therefore the addition of every name to infidelity, in some degree invalidates that argument upon which the religion of multitudes is necessarily founded." * In conclusion, let me adopt the sentiment of that illustrious moral poet of our own time, whose generous fence of Burns will be remembered while the guage lasts;—

"Let no mean hope your souls enslave—
Be independent, generous, brave;
Your" *Poet* "such example gave,
And such revere,
But be admonish'd by his grave,
And think and fear." †

* Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

† Wordsworth's address to the sons of Burns at his grave in 1803.

It is possible, perhaps for some it may be easy, to imagine a character of a much higher cast than that of Burns, developed, too, under circumstances in many respects not unlike those of his history—the character of a man of lowly birth, and powerful genius, elevated by that philosophy which is alone pure and divine, far above all those annoyances of terrestrial spleen and passion, which mixed from the beginning with the workings of his inspiration, and in the end were able to eat deep into the great heart which they had long tormented. Such a being would have received, no question; a species of devout reverence, I mean when the grave had closed on him, to which the warmest admirers of our poet can advance no pretensions for their unfortunate favourite; but could such a being have delighted his species—could he even have instructed them like Burns? Ought we not to be thankful for every new variety of form and circumstance, in and under which the ennobling energies of true and lofty genius are found addressing themselves to the common brethren of the race? Would we have none but Miltons and Cowpers in poetry—but Brownes and Southey's in prose? Alas! if it were so, to how large a portion of the species would all the gifts of all the muses remain for ever a fountain shut up and a book sealed! Were the doctrine of intellectual excommunication to be thus expounded and enforced, how small the library that would remain to kindle the fancy, to draw out and refine the feelings, to enlighten the head by expanding the heart of man! From Aristophanes to Byron, how broad the sweep, how woe-ful the desolation!

In the absence of that vehement sympathy with *humanity as it is*, its sorrows and its joys as they

are, we might have had a great man, perhaps a great poet, but we could have had no Burns. It is very noble to despise the accidents of fortune; but what moral homily concerning these, could have equalled that which Burns's poetry, considered alongside of Burns's history, and the history of his fame, presents! It is very noble to be above the allurements of pleasure; but who preaches so effectually against them, as he who sets forth in immortal verse his own intense sympathy with those that yield, and in verse and in prose, in action and in passion, in life and in death, the dangers and the miseries of yielding?

It requires a graver audacity of hypocrisy than falls to the share of most men, to declaim against Burns's sensibility to the tangible cares and toils of his earthly condition; there are more who venture on broad denunciations of his sympathy with the joys of sense and passion. To these, the great moral poet already quoted speaks in the following noble passage—and must he speak in vain? “Permit me,” says he, “to remind you, that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found,—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men.—The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war; nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love though immoderate—from convivial pleasure though intemperate—nor from the presence of war though savage, and recognised as the hand-maid of desolation. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature; both with refer-

ence to himself, and in describing the condition of others. Who, but some impenetrable dunce or narrow-minded puritan in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o'Shanter? The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset, that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within.—I pity him who cannot perceive that, in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

“Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the *ills* of life victorious.”

“What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him!—Men who to the rigidly virtuous are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve! The poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of things, has unveiled with exquisite skill the finer ties of *imagination and feeling*, that often bind these beings to

practices productive of much unhappiness to themselves, and to those whom it is their duty to cherish;—and, as far as he puts the reader into possession of this intelligent sympathy, he qualifies him for exercising a salutary influence over the minds of those who are thus deplorably deceived.” *

. That some men in every age will comfort themselves in the practice of certain vices, by reference to particular passages both in the history and in the poetry of Burns, there is all reason to fear; but surely the general influence of both is calculated, and has been found, to produce far different effects. The universal popularity which his writings have all along enjoyed among one of the most virtuous of nations, is of itself, as it would seem, a decisive circumstance. Search Scotland over, from the Pentland to the Solway, and there is not a cottage-but so poor and wretched as to be without its Bible; and hardly one that, on the same shelf, and next to it, does not possess a Burns. Have the people degenerated since their adoption of this new manual? Has their attachment to the Book of Books declined? Are their hearts less firmly bound, than were their fathers', to the old faith and the old virtues? I believe, he that knows the most of the country will be the readiest to answer all these questions, as every lover of genius and virtue would desire to hear them answered.

On one point there can be no controversy; the poetry of Burns has had most powerful influence in reviving and strengthening the national feelings of his countrymen. Amidst penury and labour, his youth fed on the old minstrelsy and traditional

* Wordsworth's Letter to Gray, page 24.

glories of his nation, and his genius divined, that what he felt so deeply must belong to a spirit that might lie smothered around him, but could not be extinguished. The political circumstances of Scotland were, and had been, such as to starve the flame of patriotism; the popular literature had striven, and not in vain, to make itself English; and, above all, a new and a cold system of speculative philosophy had begun to spread widely among us. A peasant appeared, and set himself to check the creeping pestilence of this indifference. Whatever genius has since then been devoted to the illustration of the national manners, and sustaining thereby of the national feelings of the people, there can be no doubt that Burns will ever be remembered as the founder, and, alas! in his own person as the martyr, of this reformation.

That what is now-a-days called, by solitary eminence, the *wealth* of the nation, had been on the increase ever since our incorporation with a greater and wealthier state—nay, that the laws had been improving, and, above all, the administration of the laws, it would be mere bigotry to dispute. It may also be conceded easily, that the national mind had been rapidly clearing itself of many injurious prejudices—that the people, as a people, had been gradually and surely advancing in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in wealth and security. But all this good had not been accomplished without rude work. If the improvement were valuable, it had been purchased dearly. “The spring fire,” Allan Cunningham says beautifully somewhere, “which destroys the furze, makes an end also of the nests of a thousand song-birds; and he who goes a-trouting with lime leaves little of life in the stream.” We were getting fast asha-

med of many precious and beautiful things, only for that they were old and our own.

It has already been remarked, how even Smollett, who began with a national tragedy, and one of the noblest of national lyrics, never dared to make use of the dialect of his own country; and how Moore, another most enthusiastic Scotsman, followed in this respect, as in others, the example of Smollett, and over and over again counselled Burns to do the like. But a still more striking sign of the times is to be found in the style adopted by both of these novelists, especially the great master of the art, in their representations of the manners and characters of their own countrymen. In *Humphry Clinker*, the last and best of Smollett's tales, there are some traits of a better kind—but, taking his works as a whole, the impression it conveys is certainly a painful, a disgusting one. The Scotsmen of these authors, are the Jockeys and Archies of farce—

Time out of mind the Southrons' mirthmakers—

the best of them grotesque combinations of simplicity and hypocrisy, pride and meanness. When such men, high-spirited Scottish gentlemen, possessed of learning and talents, and, one of them at least, of splendid genius, felt, or fancied, the necessity of making such submissions to the prejudices of the dominant nation, and did so without exciting a murmur among their own countrymen, we may form some notion of the boldness of Burns's experiment; and on contrasting the state of things then with what is before us now, it will cost no effort to appreciate the nature and consequences of the victory in which our poet led the way, by achievements never in their kind to be.

surpassed.* “Burns,” says Mr Campbell, “has given the elixir vitæ to his dialect:” †—he gave it to more than his dialect.

The moral influence of his genius has not been confined to his own countrymen. “The range of the *pastoral*,” said Johnson, “is narrow. Poetry cannot dwell upon the minuter distinctions by which one species differs from another, without departing from that simplicity of grandeur which *fills the imagination*; nor dissect the latent qualities of things, without losing its *general power of gratifying every mind by recalling its own conceptions*. Not only the images of rural life, but the occasions on which they can be properly applied, are few and general. The state of a man confined to the employments and pleasures of the country, is so little diversified, and exposed to so few of those accidents which produce perplexities, terrors, and surprises, in more complicated transactions, that he can be shown

* “He was,” says a writer, in whose language a brother poet will be recognised—“he was in many respects born at a happy time; happy for a man of genius like him, but fatal and hopeless to the more common mind. A whole world of life lay before Burns, whose inmost recesses, and darkest nooks, and sunniest eminences, he had familiarly trodden from his childhood. All that world he felt could be made his own. No conqueror had overrun its fertile provinces, and it was for him to be crowned supreme over all the

‘Lyric singers of that high-soul’d land.’

The crown that he has won can never be removed from his head. Much is yet left for other poets, even among that life where his spirit delighted to work; but he has built monuments on all the high places, and they who follow can only hope to leave behind them some far humbler memorials.”
—*Blackwood’s Magazine*, Feb. 1817.

† *Specimens of the British Poets*, vol. vii. p. 240.

but seldom in such circumstances as attract curiosity. His ambition is without policy, and his love without intrigue. He has no complaints to make of his rival, but that he is richer than himself; nor any disasters to lament, but a cruel mistress or a bad harvest." * Such were the notions of the great arbiter of taste, whose dicta formed the creed of the British world, at the time when Burns made his appearance to overturn all such dogmata at a single blow; to convince the loftiest of the noble, and the daintiest of the learned, that wherever human nature is at work, the eye of a poet may discover rich elements of his art—that over Christian Europe, at all events, the purity of sentiment and the fervour of passion may be found combined with sagacity of intellect, wit, shrewdness, humour, whatever elevates and whatever delights the mind, not more easily amidst the most "complicated transactions" of the most polished societies, than

" In huts where poor men lie."

Burns did not place himself only within the estimation and admiration of those whom the world called his superiors—a solitary tree emerging into light and air, and leaving the parent underwood as low and as dark as before. He, as well as any man,

" Knew his own worth, and revered the lyre ;" †

* Rambler, No. 36.

† Perhaps some readers will smile to hear, that Burns very often wrote his name on his books thus—" Robert Burns, Poet ;" and that Allan Cunningham remembers a favourite collie at Elliesland having the same inscription on his collar.

but he ever announced himself as a peasant, the representative of his class, the painter of their manners, inspired by the same influences which ruled their bosoms; and whosoever sympathized with the verse of Burns, had his soul opened for the moment to the whole family of man. If, in too many instances, the matter has stopped there—the blame is not with the poet, but with the mad and unconquerable pride and coldness of the worldly heart—"man's inhumanity to man." If, in spite of Burns, and all his successors, the boundary lines of society are observed with increasing strictness among us—if the various orders of men still, day by day, feel the chord of sympathy relaxing, let us lament over symptoms of a disease in the body politic, which, if it goes on, must find sooner or later a fatal ending: but let us not undervalue the antidote which has all along been checking this strong poison. Who can doubt that at this moment thousands of "the first-born of Egypt" look upon the smoke of a cottager's chimney with feelings which would never have been developed within their being, had there been no Burns?

Such, it can hardly be disputed, has been and is the general influence of this poet's genius; and the effect has been accomplished, not in spite of, but by means of the most exact contradiction of, every one of the principles laid down by Dr Johnson in a passage already cited; and, indeed, assumed throughout the whole body of that great author's critical disquisitions. Whatever Burns has done, he has done by his exquisite power of entering into the characters and feelings of individuals, as Heron has well expressed it, "by the effusion of particular, not general sentiments, and in the picturing out of particular imagery."

Dr Currie says, that "if *fiction* be the soul of poetry, as some assert, Burns can have small pretensions to the name of poet." The success of Burns, the influence of his verse, would alone be enough to overturn all the systems of a thousand definers; but the Doctor has obviously taken *fiction* in far too limited a sense. There are indeed but few of Burns's pieces in which he is found creating beings and circumstances, both alike alien from his own person and experience, and then by the power of imagination, divining and expressing what forms life and passion would assume with, and under these—But there are some; there is quite enough to satisfy every reader of *Hallowe'en*, the *Jolly Beggars*, and *Tam o' Shanter*, (to say nothing of various particular songs, such as *Bruce's Address*, *Macpherson's Lament*, &c.) that Burns, if he pleased, might have been as largely and as successfully an inventor in this way, as he is in another walk, perhaps not so inferior to this as many people may have accustomed themselves to believe; in the art, namely, of recombining and new-combining, varying, embellishing, and fixing and transmitting the elements of a most picturesque experience, and most vivid feelings.

Lord Byron, in his letter on Pope, treats with high and just contempt the laborious trifling which has been expended on distinguishing by air-drawn lines and technical slang-words, the elements and materials of poetical exertion; and, among other things, expresses his scorn of the attempts that have been made to class Burns among minor poets, merely because he has put forth few large pieces, and still fewer of what is called the purely imaginative character. Fight who will about words and forms, "Burns's rank," says he, "is in the first

class of his art ;” and, I believe, the world at large are now-a-days well prepared to prefer a line from such a pen as Byron’s on any such subject as this, to the most luculent dissertation that ever perplexed the brains of writer and of reader. *Sentio, ergo sum*, says the metaphysician ; the critic may safely parody the saying, and assert that that is poetry of the highest order, which exerts influence of the most powerful order on the hearts and minds of mankind.

: Burns has been appreciated duly, and he has had the fortune to be praised eloquently, by almost every poet who has come after him. To accumulate all that has been said of him, even by men like himself, of the first order, would fill a volume—and a noble monument, no question, that volume would be—the noblest, except what he has left us in his own immortal verses, which—were some dross removed, and the rest arranged in a chronological order—would I believe form, to the intelligent, a more perfect and vivid history of his life than will ever be composed out of all the materials in the world besides.

. “ The impression of his genius,” says Campbell, “ is deep and universal ; and viewing him merely as a poet, there is scarcely another regret connected with his name, than that his productions, with all their merit, fall short of the talents which he possessed. That he never attempted any great work of fiction, may be partly traced to the cast of his genius, and partly to his circumstances, and defective education. His poetical temperament was that of fitful transports, rather than steady inspiration. Whatever he might have written, was likely to have been fraught with passion. There is always enough of interest in life to cherish the

feelings of genius ; but it requires knowledge to enlarge and enrich the imagination. Of that knowledge, which unrolls the diversities of human manners, adventures, and characters, to a poet's study, he could have no great share ; although he stamped the little treasure which he possessed in the mintage of sovereign genius." *

"Notwithstanding," says Sir Walter Scott, "the spirit of many of his lyrics, and the exquisite sweetness and simplicity of others, we cannot but deeply regret that so much of his time and talents was frittered away in compiling and composing for musical collections. There is sufficient evidence, that even the genius of Burns could not support him in the monotonous task of writing love verses, on heaving bosoms and sparkling eyes, and twisting them into such rhythmical forms as might suit the capricious evolutions of Scotch reels and strathspeys. Besides, this constant waste of his power and fancy in small and insignificant compositions, must necessarily have had no little effect in deterring him from undertaking any grave or important task. Let no one suppose that we undervalue the songs of Burns. When his soul was intent on suiting a favourite air to words humorous or tender, as the subject demanded, no poet of our tongue ever displayed higher skill in marrying melody to immortal verse. But the writing of a series of songs for large musical collections, degenerated into a slavish labour which no talents could support, led to negligence, and, above all, diverted the poet from his grand plan of dramatic composition. To produce a work of this kind, neither, perhaps, a regular tragedy

* Specimens, vol. vii. p. 241.

nor comedy, but something partaking of the nature of both, seems to have been long the cherished wish of Burns. He had even fixed on the subject, which was an adventure in low life, said to have happened to Robert Bruce, while wandering in danger and disguise, after being defeated by the English. The Scottish dialect would have rendered such a piece totally unfit for the stage; but those who recollect the masculine and lofty tone of martial spirit which glows in the poem of Bannockburn, will sigh to think what the character of the gallant Bruce might have proved under the hand of Burns. It would undoubtedly have wanted that tinge of chivalrous feeling which the manners of the age, no less than the disposition of the monarch, demanded; but this deficiency would have been more than supplied by a bard who could have drawn from his own perceptions the unbending energy of a hero sustaining the desertion of friends, the persecution of enemies, and the utmost malice of disastrous fortune. The scene, too, being partly laid in humble life, admitted that display of broad humour and exquisite pathos, with which he could, interchangeably and at pleasure, adorn his cottage views. Nor was the assemblage of familiar sentiments incompatible in Burns, with those of the most exalted dignity. In the inimitable tale of *Tam o' Shanter*, he has left us sufficient evidence of his abilities to combine the ludicrous with the awful, and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humorous description of death in the poem on *Dr Hornbook* borders on the terrific, and the witches' dance in the kirk of Alloway is at once

ludicrous and horrible. Deeply must we then regret those avocations which diverted a fancy so varied and so vigorous, joined with language and expression suited to all its changes, from leaving a more substantial monument to his own fame, and to the honour of his country." *

The cantata of the *Jolly Beggars*, which was not printed at all until some time after the poet's death, and has not been included in the editions of his works until within these few years, cannot be considered as it deserves, without strongly heightening our regret that Burns never lived to execute his meditated drama. That extraordinary sketch, coupled with his later lyrics in a higher vein, is enough to show that in him we had a master capable of placing the musical drama on a level with the loftiest of our classical forms. *Beggar's Bush*, and *Beggar's Opera*, sink into tameness in the comparison; and indeed, without profanity to the name of Shakspeare, it may be said, that out of such materials, even his genius could hardly have constructed a piece in which imagination could have more splendidly predominated over the outward shows of things—in which the sympathy-awakening power of poetry could have been displayed more triumphantly under circumstances of the greatest difficulty.—That remarkable performance, by the way, was an early production of the Mauchline period;† I know nothing but the *Tam o' Shanter* that is calculated to convey so high an impression of what Burns might have done.

* *Quarterly Review*, No. 1. p. 33.

† So John Richmond of Mauchline informed Chambers—see the "Picture of Scotland," article Mauchline, for some entertaining particulars of the scene that suggested the poem.

As to Burns's want of education and knowledge, Mr Campbell may not have considered, but he must admit, that whatever Burns's opportunities had been at the time when he produced his first poems, such a man as he was not likely to be a hard reader, (which he certainly was,) and a constant observer of men and manners, in a much wider circle of society than almost any other great poet has ever moved in, from three-and-twenty to eight-and-thirty, without having thoroughly removed any pretext for auguring unfavourably on that score, of what he might have been expected to produce in the more elaborate departments of his art, had his life been spared to the usual limits of humanity. In another way, however, I cannot help suspecting that Burns's enlarged knowledge, both of men and books, produced an unfavourable effect, rather than otherwise, on the exertions, such as they were, of his later years. His generous spirit was open to the impression of every kind of excellence; his lively imagination, bending its own vigour to whatever it touched, made him admire even what other people try to read in vain; and after travelling, as he did, over the general surface of our literature, he appears to have been somewhat startled at the consideration of what he himself had, in comparative ignorance, adventured, and to have been more intimidated than encouraged by the retrospect. In most of the new departments in which he made some trial of his strength, (such, for example, as the moral epistle in Pope's vein, the *heroic* satire, &c.,) he appears to have soon lost heart, and paused. There is indeed one magnificent exception in *Tam o' Shanter*—a piece which no one can understand without believing, that *had Burns pursued that walk, and poured out his*

stores of traditionary lore, embellished with his extraordinary powers of description of all kinds, we might have had from his hand a series of national tales, uniting the quaint simplicity, sly humour, and irresistible pathos of another Chaucer, with the strong and graceful versification, and masculine wit and sense of another Dryden.

This was a sort of feeling that must have in time subsided.—But let us not waste words in regretting what might have been, where so much is. Burns, short and painful as were his years, has left behind him a volume in which there is inspiration for every fancy, and music for every mood ; which lives, and will live in strength and vigour—“to soothe,” as a generous lover of genius has said—“the sorrows of how many a lover, to inflame the patriotism of how many a soldier, to fan the fires of how many a genius, to disperse the gloom of solitude, appease the agonies of pain, encourage virtue, and show vice its ugliness ;”^{*}—a volume, in which, centuries hence, as now, wherever a Scotsman may wander, he will find the dearest consolation of his exile. Already has

“ ————— Glory without end
Scattered the clouds away ; and on that name attend
The tears and praises of all time.”[†]

^{*} See the *Censura Literaria* of Sir Egerton Brydges, vol. ii. p. 55.

[†] *Childe Harold*, Canto iv. 36.

FINIS.

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